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ABSTRACT

Over a 10-year period, the oral language development of 338 pupils was studied from kindergarten through grade 9 to establish the most crucial and frequent oral language difficulties. Recorded samples of oral English from each subject were segmented by oral intonation patterns and syntactic units, and were analyzed yearly in terms of 21 oral language problems or deviations from standard spoken English. Progress in resolving these difficulties was then plotted for four groups-Caucasians with high and low language proficiency, Negroes with low language proficiency, and a random sample. Results indicated that the most persistent difficulties for those children not handicapped by social dialect are not in usage but in developing coherence and organization and that individual instruction in this area is much more helpful than drill in usage. On the other hand, the most persistent problems for Negro children are those of usage, particularly compound verbs and the verb "to be." Oral drill based on expressing ideas, attitudes, and values of concern to the learners is more effective instruction than workbook drill. (This report is based on an earlier study, ED 001 275.) (This document previously announced as ED 023 653.) (DL)

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ED 070106

Problems * in Oral English

BY WALTER LOBAN

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KEY FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

Unless they can learn to use standard English, many pupils will be denied access to economic opportunities or entrance to many social groups. The purpose of this report is to clarify the most crucial language difficulties so teachers may decide where to place instructional emphasis.

This study clarifies and counts examples of nonstandard oral usage among four different groups of school children from kindergarten through grade nine.

Among subjects speaking standard English, language difficulties are matters of sensitivity to clarity and precision of communication rather than problems of grammar or usage.

Among subjects speaking a social class dialect, the most troublesome language problem is difficulty with verbs, especially the verb **to be**. Dialect students need help with coherence as well as with usage.

As children mature and speak with more complexity and in longer units of expression, their difficulties with coherence increase.

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PROBLEMS IN ORAL ENGLISH

Kindergarten through Grade Nine

by
WALTER LOBAN
University of California, Berkeley

NCTE Research Report No. 5

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

CS 200 317

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is another in the series of publications which make available to the profession results of significant research studies. *Problems in Oral English* presents certain findings of a longitudinal study of language development. Professor Loban's study is unique in that it is the first of its kind; the group of children comprising the population has been followed for a ten-year period. Since the development of language is a gradual process, only through continuous observation and study can the acquisition of language be studied.

Professor Loban states that for most children a command of standard English is necessary, for "society exacts penalties of individuals who do not possess it." If the children are to be helped to acquire it, the first step is recognition of their needs followed by opportunities for children to listen and to speak in situations where standard usage is the medium of communication.

In Research Report No. 1, *The Language of Elementary School Children*, Professor Loban reported the first phase of his longitudinal study of language development. This publication, as the previous one, invites the reader to explore, with scientific detachment, the language development of American students.

For the Committee on Research
DORIS V. GUNDERSON
Associate Chairman

The research reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Much of the information presented in this report, as well as additional data on the language development of these same subjects, is included in the original study, *Language Ability: Grades Seven, Eight, and Nine*, a report to the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare by Walter Loban in 1964. This study is available at 100 depositories throughout the nation.

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INTRODUCTION

Some pupils have difficulties in speaking standard English as it is typically used by most Americans. This is not a problem of regional language variation but rather one of social class dialect.

Dialects are differing ways of speaking a language. Vocabulary, syntax, and pronunciation differ from one dialect to another, yet the differences are not so great that persons using different dialects cannot communicate. Whereas verbal communication is almost negligible between an Italian and a Dane who do not speak each other's language, an Italian from Venice can understand an Italian from another part of Italy even though both speak dialects differing from standard Italian (Tuscan). Language inevitably varies with region and with culture, and in most languages these regional and cultural dialects occur. A dialect is so called because neither it nor the majority's standard language differs enough to be completely unintelligible to the speakers of either group.

Whereas regional differences in language are usually acceptable and in many respects delightful, social class dialects offer a difficult problem to American schools in which equality of opportunity for all pupils is accepted as an aim. Economic and social lines have always been difficult to cross, and language is one of the strongest barriers to a fluid society in which human worth is to count for more than fortunate birth. It is a sociological fact that all speech communities tend to feel hostility or disdain for those who do not use their language. "He doesn't talk like us" is a way to say "He is not one of us."

To be realistic, American teachers acknowledge that most children need to perfect or acquire the prestige dialect—not because standard English is correct or superior in itself but because society exacts severe penalties of those who do not speak it. Unless they can learn to use standard English, many pupils will be denied access to economic opportunities or entrance to social groups. The leaders of most communities are sensitive to departures from the informal English which tends to be the standard, accepted language of their communities. It follows, then, that children who speak a social class dialect need the chance to learn standard usage.

The purpose of this report is to identify the most crucial and frequent oral language difficulties so teachers may decide where to place instructional emphasis. These problems of oral English have been stud-

ied in a representative group of 338 pupils for whom samples of oral speech were recorded once a year for ten years.[1]

Each subject was interviewed individually and his spoken response recorded annually on either a tape or a similar recording device (the Audograph). At the beginning of the interview, the examiner encouraged the subject to become talkative by asking him questions about playmates, games, television, illness, and wishes. Next the subject was shown, for the remainder of the interview, a series of six pictures, the same pictures being used for all subjects. These pictures were chosen for their interest, their success in preliminary trials, or their value in previous research. The subjects were asked to discuss what they saw in each picture and what each picture made them think about. These recorded interviews, transcribed into typewritten form, became the basis for analysis.

Definition of Terms

In this research, devising an objective method for segmenting the flow of oral language was a critical problem. The system finally chosen was one combining several approaches. First the subjects' speech was segmented by oral intonation patterns and then, within such intonation segments, syntactic units (each independent predication) were identified.

The first of these—intonation pattern—is dependent upon the patterns of sound made by the human voice; it is judged by the contours of inflection, stress, and pause in the subjects' voices. Because the segmentation is made in accordance with the sound system of English, this first and more comprehensive segment will be called a *phonological unit*.

The second unit, always equivalent to or a subdivision of the larger phonological unit, is a syntactical pattern—each instance of independent predication. It will be called a *communication unit* because it can also be identified by the semantic meaning being communicated.[2]

Usage, in this research, will mean the established oral language *habits* of an individual. We assume that such usage is internalized by the subject as he hears and imitates the speech of home and neighborhood, that such usage is not a deliberate plan rationalized on a conscious level. It should be clear that this is not *grammar*. *Grammar* is a careful description and analysis of the structure of a language—its sound structure,

[1] Notes appear on pp. 59-60.

word structure, phrase and sentence structure. A third term needed for examining spoken language is *rhetoric*, the deliberate conscious strategies a speaker uses to make his language an effective means of communication. Rhetoric transcends grammar and usage, for it concerns such matters as consistency of verb tense from one sentence to another, clear reference of pronouns, and strategic choices among several ways of organizing sentences. Rhetoric is the art of using language effectively *in order to present ideas clearly*. *Usage* may cover vocabulary and pronunciation as well as constructions, but in this research vocabulary and pronunciation are not included.

Acceptable standard English, according to the widely used definition by Fries, is

> a set of language habits in which the major matters of the political, social, economic, educational, religious life of this country are carried on. To these language habits is attached a certain prestige, for the use of them suggests constant relations with those responsible for the important affairs of our communities. It is this set of language habits . . . which is the "standard" not because it is any more correct or more beautiful or more capable than other varieties of English; it is "standard" solely because it is the particular type of English used in the conduct of the important affairs of our people. It is also the type of English used by the *socially acceptable* of most of our communities, and insofar as that is true it has become social or class dialect in the United States.[3]

In this study we are concerned with obvious *departures* or *deviations from standard English*. We are *not* concerned with disputed items of usage such as *It's me, Who are you looking for?* or *Everyone has their instructions*. Instead we mean, by "nonstandard," usages such as these:

The calf don't want no milk.
He has ate.
Him washing he clothes.
They was here yesterday.

The nonstandard usages and their occurrences among the subjects will be presented after a discussion of the sample and the methods of analysis.[4]

The Groups To Be Studied and Compared

From the total number of subjects, four subgroups have been selected, and these have been designated respectively as Caucasian

(High Language Proficiency), Caucasian (Low Language Proficiency), Negro (Low Language Proficiency), and Random. Each of the first three groups contains twenty-one subjects and was chosen according to ability with language. The Random group contains fifty subjects and was selected from the total sample on an equal probability basis, e.g., with a table of random numbers.

Method of Selecting the Subgroups

A ten-year average of oral language ratings (by teachers) was computed for all subjects. The three subgroups were then selected on a rank-order basis. As indicated, the Random group was not selected according to language ability.

That some nonstandard language was predominantly a matter of social dialect was obvious from a preliminary examination of the data. Therefore, rather than risk clouding the data by using ethnically mixed groups, the decision was made to study Caucasian and Negroes separately and to use a Random group as a representation of a typically mixed sample of all students. If ethnically mixed groups of twenty-one subjects had been used on a straight rank-order basis, two Negro subjects would have fallen into the group high in language proficiency. Naturally there are in any city Negro children who come from homes where excellent and standard English is spoken. The effort, here, is to use those in the study who speak either a dialect or nonstandard English in order to identify language problems with which the schools can help. Those subjects in the Negro group who rated low in language proficiency proved to be predominantly those whose parents had emigrated from the South and were below average in education and income. Negro children from homes of high income and superior educational background did not, of course, fall into this group.

The Random group, representative of the total group, consists of fifty members, forty-four Caucasian, five Negro, and one Oriental. This Random group is drawn from a population sample representing the ethnic, economic, intellectual, and sexual distribution of typical urban school populations in the United States.[5]

Statistical Problems

Obviously the care and logic with which comparisons are made among groups is crucial. Methods of analysis can be helpful or confus-

ing, honest or dishonest, simple or complicated. However, in a study like this one, not all readers will want to examine statistics in detail before they have understood the total strategy. For that reason, statistical features of analysis have been placed in the Appendix, pages 61-72, where a detailed discussion of the considerations underlying the comparisons is available, as well as tables indicating the adjusted arithmetic means used in the graphic presentation.

Analysis of Nonstandard English

The presentation of nonstandard speech will now be shown, first by an explanation of each classification of nonstandard language behavior and then by examples of each particular classification along with a graphic depiction.

The spoken language of all subjects in the four groups was transcribed into typewritten form and segmented into communication units as described on page 2. Wherever any doubt existed about the segmentation, the phonological unit as well as the communication unit was charted. Next, examples of nonstandard English were underlined in the segments, and as examples occurred they were assigned to tentative categories. Eventually the following categories accounted for all examples of nonstandard oral English and were adopted for this research.

CATEGORIES USED FOR TALLYING PROBLEMS IN ORAL LANGUAGE

Verb Problems

1A: Lack of agreement of subject and verb, third person singular (excluding all forms of the verb *to be*)

1B: Lack of agreement of subject and verb for all forms except the third person singular (again excluding all forms of the verb *to be*)

1C: Lack of agreement of subject and verb while using forms of the verb *to be*

1D: Omission of the verb *to be*

1E: Omission of auxiliary verbs

1F: Nonstandard use of verb forms

1G: Inconsistency in the use of tense

Pronoun Problems

2A: Nonstandard use of pronouns

2B: Use of *that* instead of *who* as a relative pronoun referring to persons

2C: Confusing use of pronouns

Syntactic Confusion

3A: Ambiguous placement of a word, phrase, or clause

3B: Awkward arrangement or incoherence

4A: Omission (except of auxiliary verbs)

4B: Unnecessary repetition

Other Problems

5A: Nonstandard connection (prepositions)

5B: Nonstandard connection (conjunctions)

6A: Nonstandard modification (adjectival)

6B: Nonstandard modification (adverbial)

7: Nonstandard use of noun forms

8: Double negatives

9: Nonstandard use of possessives

Verb Problems

1A: Lack of agreement of subject and verb, third person singular (excluding all forms of the verb *to be*)

EXAMPLE: He *say* he is going home.
The boy *don't* look happy.
We have to see it because he *want* to see it.
My mother *look* at television a lot.
One girl *have* a basket on her bike.

COMMENT: In English, verbs have a peculiar irregularity in that the third person singular adds an *s* in the present tense. For the Negro group, lack of agreement here is one of the most prevalent deviations from standard English usage—particularly in the earlier years of school. In the ten years of this study their change to standard English on this item is quite marked.

This category is a minor problem for the Low Caucasian group, a lesser problem for the Random group, and a negligible problem for the High Caucasian group. The Low Caucasian group is most likely to have difficulty with the verb *do*. The Negro children often omit the *s* ending on verbs as in *wants* and *looks* in the examples above.

1B: Lack of agreement of subject and verb for all forms except the third person singular (again excluding all forms of the verb *to be*)

EXAMPLE: They *runs* down the street.
The two little girls *looks* at the little boy.
She asks him while they *walks* home from the movie.
We *likes* to ride our bikes in the park.
You *turns* that machine on too fast.
I *sees* it.

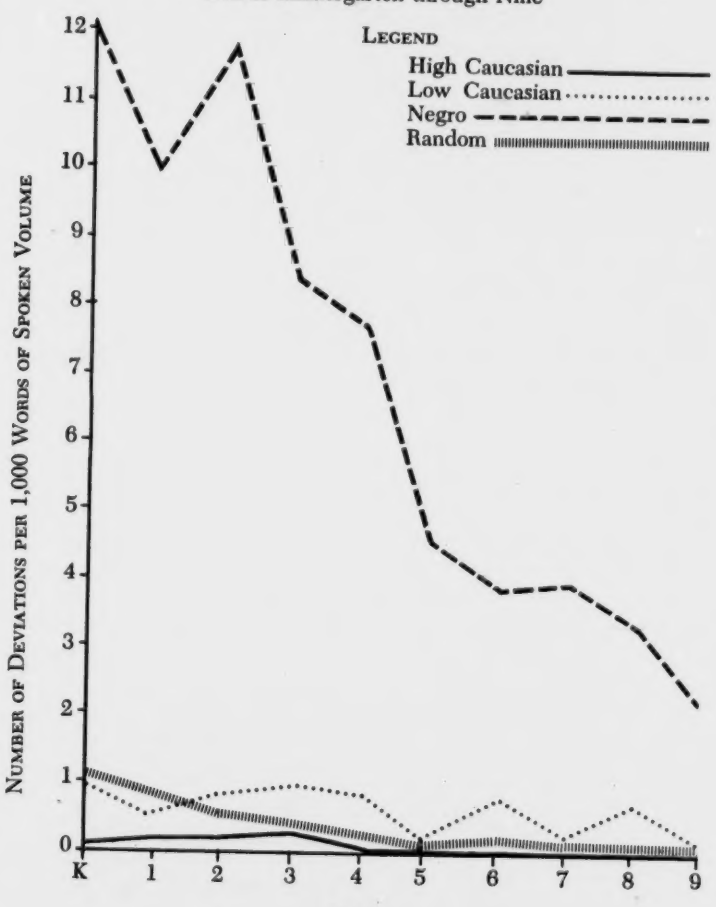
COMMENT: The incidence of this problem was virtually nonexistent for all four groups. As a result, *no graphic presentation has been made.* (See Appendix, Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8.)

The Negro child occasionally adds a superfluous *s* to verbs as in the examples given above.

FIGURE 1

Lack of Agreement of Subject and Verb, Third Person Singular (excluding all forms of the verb *to be*)

NUMBER OF 1A DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

1C: Lack of agreement of subject and verb while using forms of the verb *to be*

EXAMPLE: I *is* going outside.
We *is* the best ones.
I thought you *was* going to ask me that.

There *was* three girls.
Here *is* two dogs.

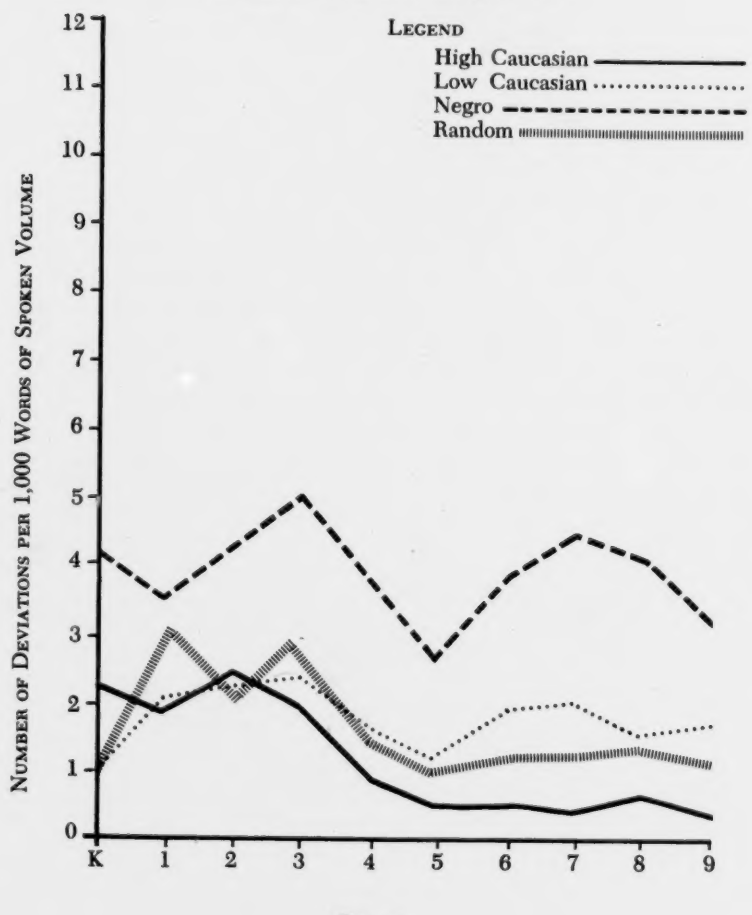
COMMENT: All four groups have difficulty with this during the early years, but the Negro group has a persistent difficulty through the ten-year period. The High Caucasian subjects improve notably, and their incidence for this deviation is virtually zero from grade five through grade nine. At all grade levels the problem for them occurs mainly with expletives as illustrated by the last two examples above, and after grade five no serious problem exists, even with expletives.

Linguistic historians have pointed out that the singular *is* or *was* used with all persons is a speech pattern the first slaves could have learned from English colonists whose ancestors had used such forms as far back as the thirteenth century.[6]

FIGURE 2

Lack of Agreement of Subject and Verb While Using Forms of the Verb *To Be*

NUMBER OF 1C DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

1D: Omission of the verb *to be*

EXAMPLE: He (is) happy.
That girl (is) my friend.
They (were) here to see us yesterday.
The reason I didn't go (was that) I didn't want to.
What had happened when they were travelling to the dog show (was that) Lad lost his favorite suitcase.

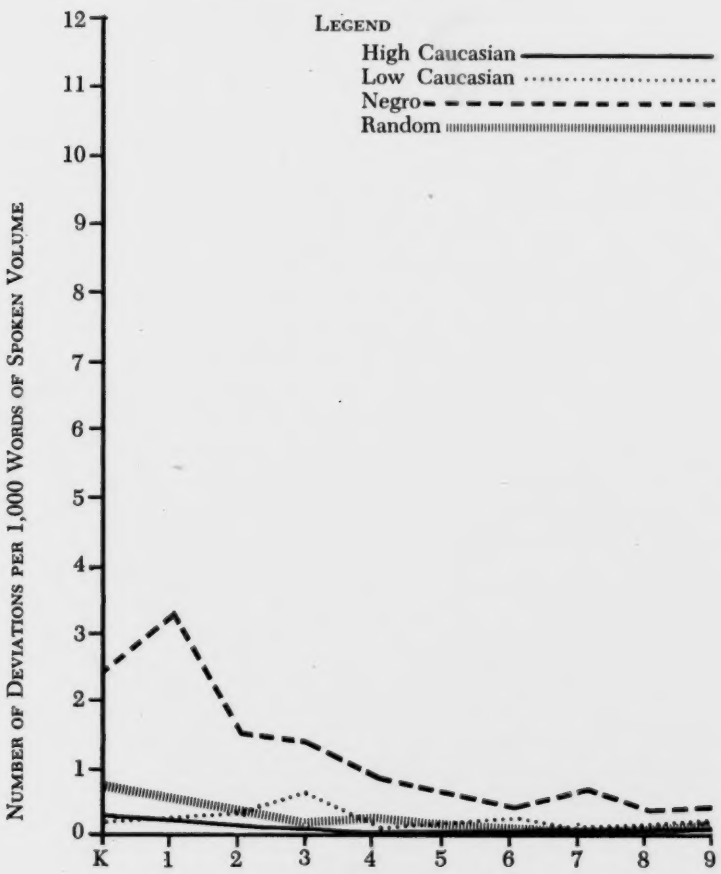
COMMENT: Omission of the verb *to be* as the main verb of a sentence is a minor problem for both Caucasian groups and for the Random group; for the Negro group, however, the problem is substantial in the early years and is then steadily brought under control.

As the subjects grow older, all groups show a change in the content in which omission of *to be* takes place. In the early years, for the Negro group, the deviation is illustrated by the first three examples above, whereas in the later years, for members of any group, the verb *to be* may be omitted in more complex situations like those in the last two examples above. In these last examples the problem is not a matter of usage but rather skillful organization of syntactical elements in order to achieve clear, smooth communication.

FIGURE 3

Omission of the Verb *To Be*

NUMBER OF 1D DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

1E: Omission of auxiliary verbs

EXAMPLE: He (is) running away.
He (has) been here.
She (will) be happy to hear the news.
I guess if he wanted to, he (could) do it.
I see two of them who (are) running.
They (have) been tormenting me all day.
How (do) you know he isn't here?

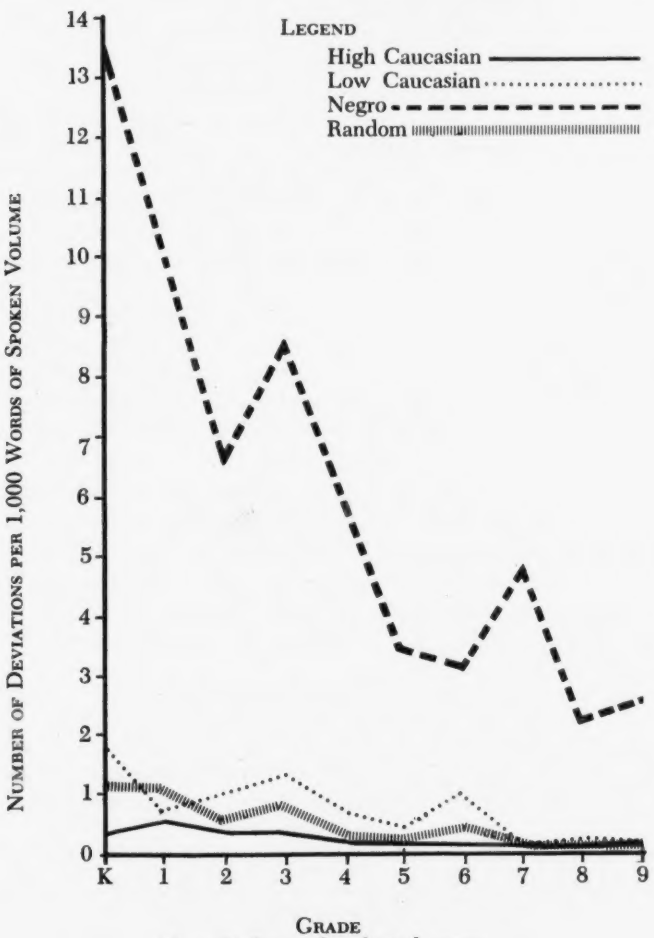
COMMENT: Omission of auxiliary verbs can best be described as follows: for the Negro group, an extreme problem steadily being brought under control over the ten-year period; for the Low Caucasian group, a minor problem in the early years; for the High Caucasian group, an insignificant problem for the entire period. Again, the Random group shows a mixed pattern, having a minor difficulty during the early years and then approaching the performance of the High Caucasian group (from grade four onward). This would be expected because Caucasians outnumber Negroes ten to one in the Random group.

Most of the difficulty for the Negro subjects centers on auxiliaries formed from the verb *to be*. This indicates that this category may be closely related to category 1D and should be viewed as additional evidence that handling the verb *to be* is a major problem for Negro children learning standard usage. As the next-to-the-last example above shows, the Negro dialect tends always to drop the *first* auxiliary.

FIGURE 4

Omission of Auxiliary Verbs

NUMBER OF 1E DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

1F: Nonstandard use of verb forms

EXAMPLE: He has *ate*.
She *ain't* told him.
He *don't be* there much.
She *bes* my best friend.
I was *laying* in bed.
I *seen* him yesterday.
They *rided* their bicycles to the store.
She *told* him why are you doing that?
He had *ran* away before they got there.
I would've *took* him.

COMMENT: In this case, acceptable colloquial expressions with which some teachers might find fault—such as (1) *was* instead of *were* for supposition, (2) *hadn't ought* for *shouldn't*, (3) *got* for *has* or *have*—have been disregarded.

The Random group and both Caucasian groups have a continuing but relatively minor problem with nonstandard verb forms, whereas the Negro group encounters considerable difficulty from kindergarten through grade nine and actually shows an increase for grades seven and eight. Once again the verb *to be* is occasionally a part of their trouble—as in *ain't* and "She *bes* my best friend."

An interesting aspect of this category: for Caucasian subjects during the early years the most frequent problem is the use of verb forms not actually existing in the English language, such as "He *spreaded* it" instead of "He *spread* it." (The child is logically assuming a regularity not true of English verbs.) In later years their main difficulty is with the standard use of the past participle, such as "He has *ran*" instead of "He has *run*," in the verbs.

Typically, English verbs decline as follows:

PRESENT:	walk	thump
PAST:	walked	thumped
PAST PERFECT:	have walked	have thumped

However, many English verbs are irregular and do not follow the typical form of adding *ed* to the present tense to form the past tense. Quite naturally, English-speaking children experience confusion and have difficulty with these irregular verbs. This situation is not likely to change, and the problem will continue to persist for teachers. Fifty years ago,

Charters' study established a basic list of American children's errors.[7] Forty percent of all the errors were located in fifteen common verbs, and almost all of these verbs were in confusion of the past tense with past participle. Those fifteen verbs were *see, come, run, write, begin, break, drink, lie, do, go, give, take, ring, sing,* and *sit.*

The following table from the present study presents the same problem with the fifteen Charters' verbs starred.

The verb difficulties Charters located fifty years ago still trouble children learning to speak standard English. The trouble with *lie* and *lay* has apparently increased over the years, very likely because the distinction between the two verbs is increasingly ignored by adult speakers. *Snuck* for *sneaked* appears to be making an attempt to establish its place in the language. *Fall, throw,* and *bring* appear to be more troublesome than they were in 1916. Otherwise the situation has changed little in fifty years. (Two verbs on the list—*sink* and *drown*—appear there because one of the stimulus pictures led to an unusually frequent use of those two verbs.)

For the Negro certain verbs are much more likely to be used in nonstandard forms: *lie, break, come, fall, go, run, see,* and *take.*

TABLE ON NONSTANDARD USE OF VERB FORMS[1]

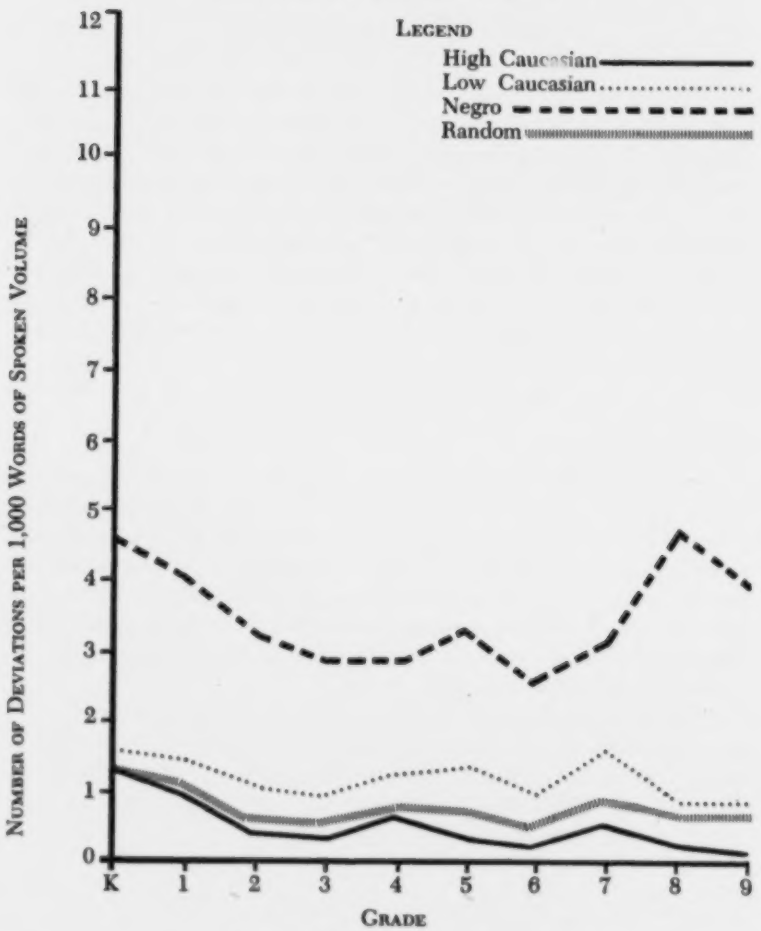
Verb	*Total Deviations*	*Low (Negro)*	*Low (Caucasian)*	*Random*	*High (Caucasian)*
*lie	183	82	40	38	23
*see	77	57	7	9	4
sink	51	8	17	19	7
*go	42	29	3	9	1
fall	40	17	9	7	7
*break	39	26	4	4	5
*come	38	21	9	4	4
sneak	33	7	8	11	7
*run	29	16	4	4	5
*take	20	10	4	2	4
drown	18	10	6	2	0
throw	17	9	7	1	0
*do	16	7	5	4	0
blow	16	6	6	3	1
bring	15	8	4	3	0
steal	13	6	4	3	0
tear	11	8	3	0	0
*give	8	4	2	1	1
*ring	5	3	1	1	0
*write	5	3	0	1	1
*sit	2	2	0	0	0
*drink	2	1	0	1	0
*begin	1	1	0	0	0
*sing	0	0	0	0	0

[1]The starred verbs are those appearing on Charters' list of fifteen.

FIGURE 5

Nonstandard Use of Verb Forms

NUMBER OF 1F DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

1G: Inconsistency in the use of tense

EXAMPLE: I ate breakfast in the morning. I *run* to the store then to buy a comic book.
One time when I was sick, my mother *comes* in to see me.
She knew if she *does* something bad he would find out.
She draws on him, and the man *shot* her.

COMMENT: The Negro and Low Caucasian groups have an erratic and persistent problem with tense from kindergarten onward, a problem that increases until the seventh grade. In the early years they have difficulty with simple expressions such as the last three examples above. Beginning in grade four, their difficulties are centered in more complex sequences of tense. Switching back and forth between present and past tense in long passages of uninterrupted speech (giving a long description of the pictures used in the interview or a lengthy explanation of a book they have read) is especially noticeable. The Random group typically falls between the High Caucasian and Low Caucasian groups.

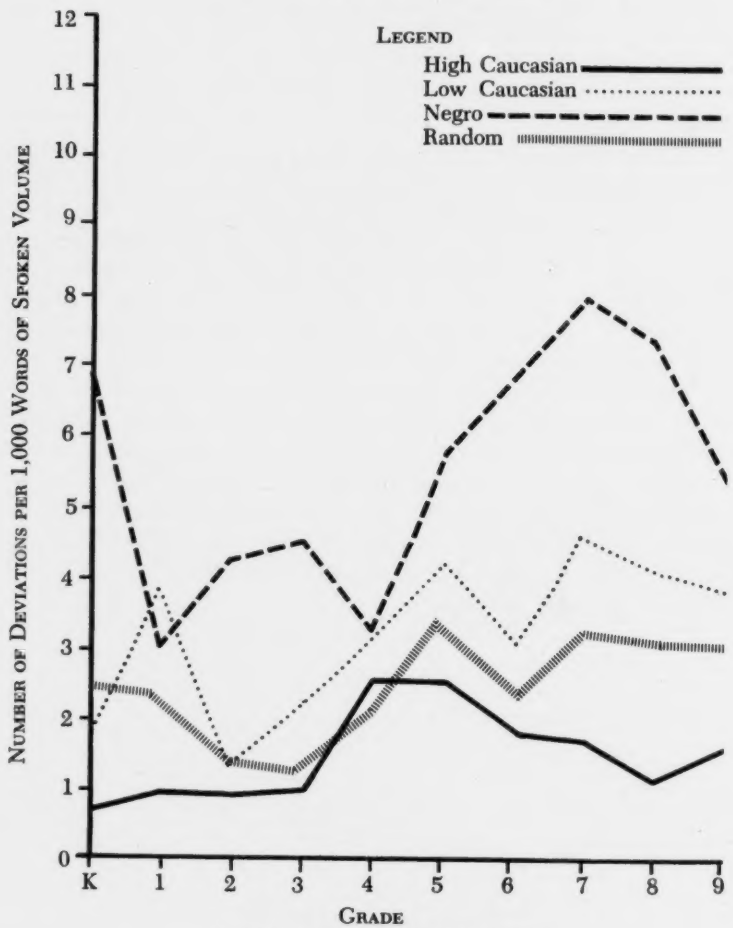
For the High Caucasian group the language behavior on this matter is quite different. In the early years this group experiences very little difficulty with simple tense sequences. In grades four and five, they show an abrupt increase in this problem, mainly as a result of early experimentation with complex tense structures. After grade five the problem seems to be coming under control although they still have some tense inconsistencies from sentence to sentence and show a minor increase in grade nine. As in several other categories in the study this group, initially more proficient with language, meets the problem somewhat earlier than the less proficient subjects and makes headway in solving the problem a year or so earlier than the other groups.

Unlike the earlier six categories which are clearly problems of usage, this matter of maintaining consistency of tense is *not* a problem of usage (habit) but a deeper problem—remembering to be consistent, to be clear and unambiguous. This is a thinking skill, a rhetorical skill, deeply tied to awareness of clear communication.

FIGURE 6

Inconsistency in the Use of Tense

NUMBER OF 1G DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

Pronoun Problems

2A: Nonstandard use of pronouns

EXAMPLE: *Her* went to town.
My sister and *them* went with me.
They eyes are blue.
She went to *she* house.
I have one of *them* hoops.
The witch was kind to Laura and *I*.
He did it by *hisself*.

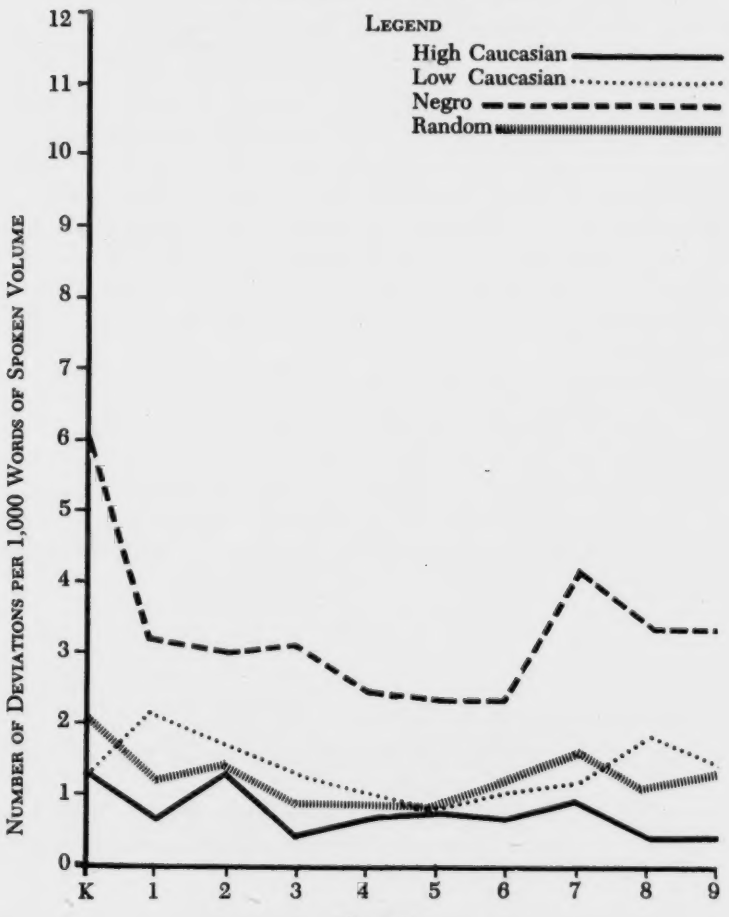
COMMENT: In the kindergarten the Negro group had a significant problem, most often illustrated by the use of the objective case in a situation where the nominative case is required as illustrated by the first two examples above. In addition, the Negro group had a kindergarten problem of confusion of sex of the pronoun as related to the antecedent. Other research has shown that most children have this problem somewhat earlier.[8] Limitations of language practice in culturally disadvantaged groups may retard subjects, regardless of race.

Nonstandard use of pronouns, then, is a persistent problem for all groups, with the Negro group having the most difficulty, the High Caucasian group the least. However, there is a notable change in the content of this deviation as the subjects grow older. Whereas they were once troubled by "*Her* went to town," they now confuse case usage as in the example "He gave it to Mary and *I*," a usage perhaps induced by the belief that *I* is more elegant than *me*, a result of purist instruction or nonschool concern over "It is *I*."

FIGURE 7

Nonstandard Use of Pronouns

NUMBER OF 2A DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

2B: Use of *that* instead of *who* as a relative pronoun referring to persons

EXAMPLE: I saw the man *that* I knew.
There goes the girl *that* is running away.

COMMENT: In her study of current American usage, Bryant concludes: "*That* usually refers to 'thing' antecedents but it may refer as well to 'person' antecedents."[9] She notes, however, that 90 percent of the instances she collected were "thing" antecedents. In any case, this problem was slight in the present study and showed an erratic pattern for all four groups, and as a result it has not been presented graphically. (See Appendix, Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8.) It is interesting to note, however, that the Negro group has the lowest incidence of this deviation. This apparently results from the Negro group's use of fewer relative clauses than the Random group or either of the Caucasian groups. This evidence joins with the fact that the Negro group consistently has a lower average words per unit than either of the Caucasian groups. (See Appendix, Table 2.)

The work of Bernstein[10] among British Cockneys and the findings of the present study in its complete form[11] indicate that low socioeconomic groups, regardless of race, do not elaborate sentences as much as do middle and upper socioeconomic groups. Low socioeconomic groups do not seem to use language as often to express subjective feeling, to analyze or synthesize concepts, or to consider relationships. As a result they use fewer subordinate clauses, appositives, infinitives, and phrases of all kinds.

2C: Confusing use of pronouns

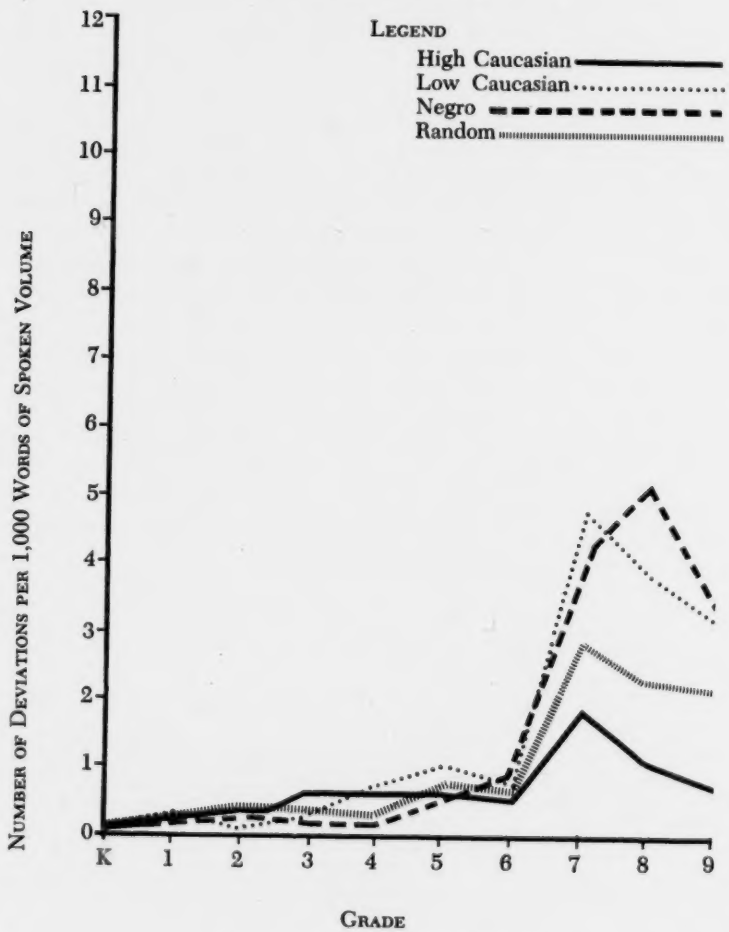
EXAMPLE: *They* thought *they* were waving at *them* when *they* rode by *them*.
So Pinky went over to *her* house, and *she* helped *her*.
Every time *she'd* do something, *she* would turn *her* head.

COMMENT: During the early years, the confusing use of pronouns is virtually no problem for any group. However, the problem begins to grow in grades five and six, and *all groups* show an abrupt increase in

FIGURE 8

Confusing Use of Pronouns

NUMBER OF 2C DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

grade seven. The Negro group and the Low Caucasian group are approximately equal in this deviation; each group has substantial difficulty in the later years.

For all groups, the difficulty in grades seven, eight, and nine is a failure to make precise distinctions in more complicated content, typified by the two examples above. Subjects use the same pronoun to refer to several people in a story being told. Such ambiguity with pronouns is a common language behavior for all speakers, even adults, and in the context of the situation is often not a serious problem. In this research, with the presence of the pictures to which the child was referring, the context usually made the pronouns fairly clear. However, in long accounts about books the subjects had read, pronoun reference was not always clear, especially when the reference was to some antecedent in a previous sentence rather than in the same sentence.

In the case of reference of pronouns to antecedents, the analyst gave, wherever possible, benefit of doubt and accepted the importance of context. Thus the results here are, if anything, underplayed rather than exaggerated. In summary, then, we may note that a confusing use of pronouns emerges as the subjects develop the use of longer, more complex expressions. This problem is not a matter of language habits but rather a matter of sensitivity to the listener's needs. Freedom from ambiguity in pronouns and clear reference of all kinds require a speaker who is sensitive to the needs of his listener. Thus the problem we have encountered here moves beyond usage to the jurisdiction of rhetoric, imagination, and clear, precise communication.

Syntactic Confusion

3A: Ambiguous placement of a word, phrase, or clause

EXAMPLE: The man is blowing a horn *with a hat on.*
The curtains were hanging up *and shades.*
Lloyd we have to see it because he likes to see it.
When I come home, I wish my sister would stop hanging on me.
I *only* saw one boy.

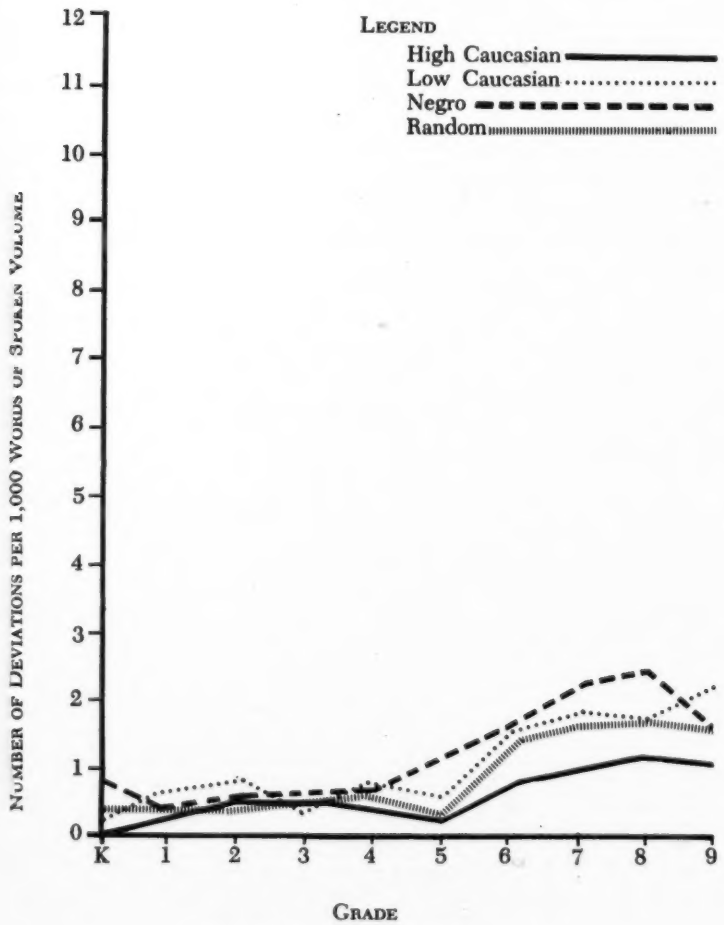
COMMENT: This was a minor problem for all four groups until grade six. At that point and throughout grades seven, eight, and nine, all groups experienced more difficulty. This appears to be the result of an increase in complexity of sentence structure as the subjects grow older—more complexity offers more probability of misplaced sentence elements. An interesting aspect of this problem is that the High Caucasian group shows less difficulty than the other groups *in spite of the fact* that the High Caucasian group uses more grammatical complexity and has a higher average number of words per communication unit.

Once again, this proves to be something other than usage, usage based on habit. Misplacement of structural elements, such as occur in this category, is a matter of coherent thought and imaginative sensitivity to the problems of one's listener. A high degree of mental agility and awareness of the pitfalls of communication seem to be necessary requirements for reducing this kind of language roughness.

FIGURE 9

Ambiguous Placement of a Word, Phrase, or Clause

NUMBER OF 3A DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

3B: Awkward arrangement or incoherence

EXAMPLE: A couple of weeks is school out.
You make a circle with everybody go in.
He signals to all the pitchers in these games what he'd hit and win.

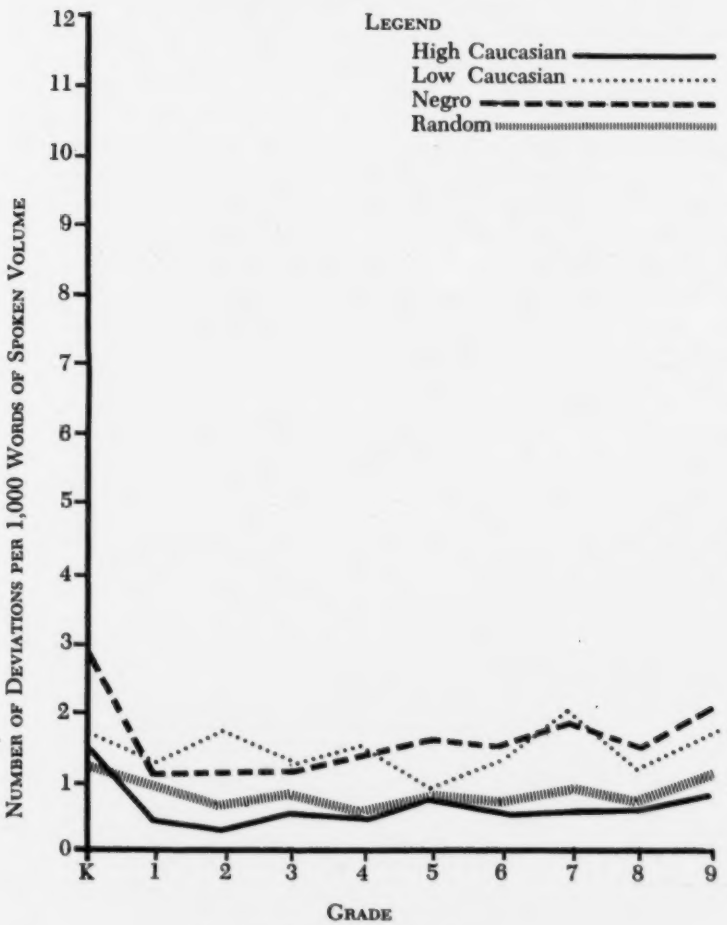
COMMENT: This is an insignificant problem for both the High Caucasian group and the Random group. The Negro group has some problem in kindergarten, but then reduces the problem to about the same level as the Low Caucasian group. Actually, this category is so similar to the previous one—ambiguous placement of a word, phrase, or clause—that they might well be combined. The main difference is that the difficulties classified here are those of a general pervasive vagueness or incoherence whereas those of the previous category are specific examples of misplaced elements.

The problem is deeper than usage, and successful improvement undoubtedly requires experience in conveying meaning in situations where imprecision of language impairs important communication so drastically that thoughts must be rephrased. There is some light indication that the problem will increase as the pupils enter adolescence and use more complex language structures.

FIGURE 10

Awkward Arrangement or Incoherence

NUMBER OF 3B DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

4A: Omission (except of auxiliary verbs)

EXAMPLE: He slipped (out of) the house with his violin.
He was waiting (for) his mother and father.

COMMENT: From kindergarten through grade five, the Negro group has difficulty with omissions, but slowly brings the problem under control. However, members of this group show an *increase* in this deviation for grades six and seven, and by grade nine they have reduced their incidence of omissions only to the point they had achieved in grade five.

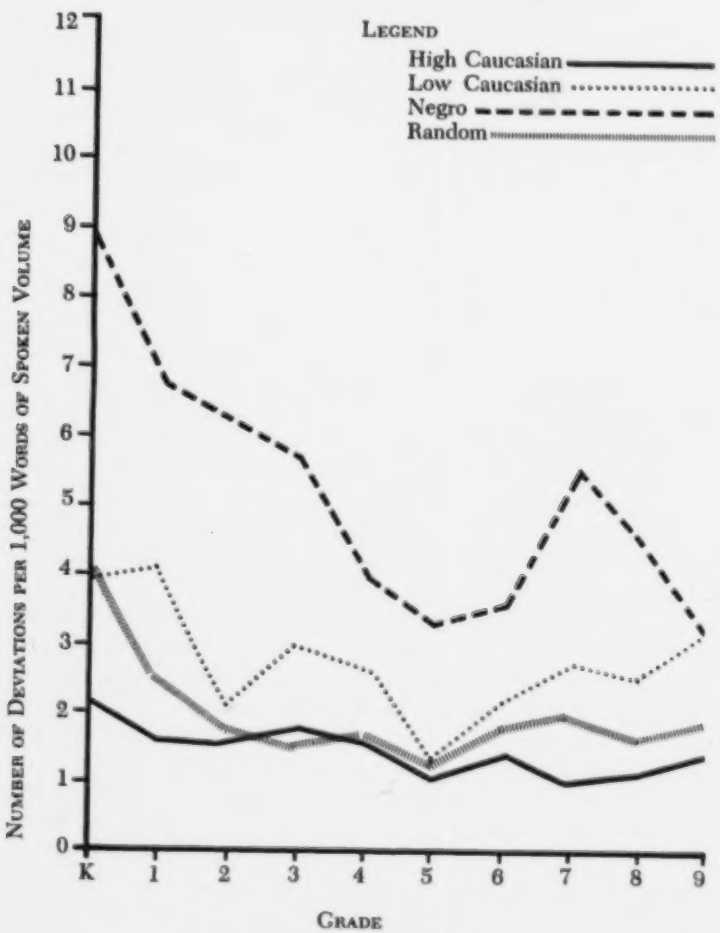
The Low Caucasian group has less difficulty than the Negro group, but shows a persistent *increase* from grade six through grade nine.

An explanation of the somewhat erratic graphic presentation cannot be given statistically, but it can be given from *firsthand observation* of the subjects. In early years omissions were actually "committed" because of an inadequate ability to use language. In later years the subjects seem to be more at ease with language but appear to have grown more *careless*. The results in this category may also be contaminated by poor articulation and pronunciation.

FIGURE 11

Omission (Except of Auxiliary Verbs)

NUMBER OF 4A DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

4B: Unnecessary repetition

EXAMPLE: I go *you know* to buy ice cream *you know* at the store.
And *he told* me to take it very often *he said.*
They had *on* hats and different clothes *on.*
Well this George he was *well* kind of shy.
He got proof that *again* his swing was good *again.*

COMMENT: Unnecessary repetition shows an erratic pattern and is quite minor for all groups (just barely worthy of being presented graphically). However, it should be noted that repetitions of the subject, such as "*Jim he* went out" or "The little *girl she* got a bunny," were not counted. In this research these are considered acceptable statements of the sentence topic; in adult speech they emerge as frequent and fairly acceptable oral usage, e.g., "That man who brings our newspaper every morning, well, he's not my ideal example of promptness."

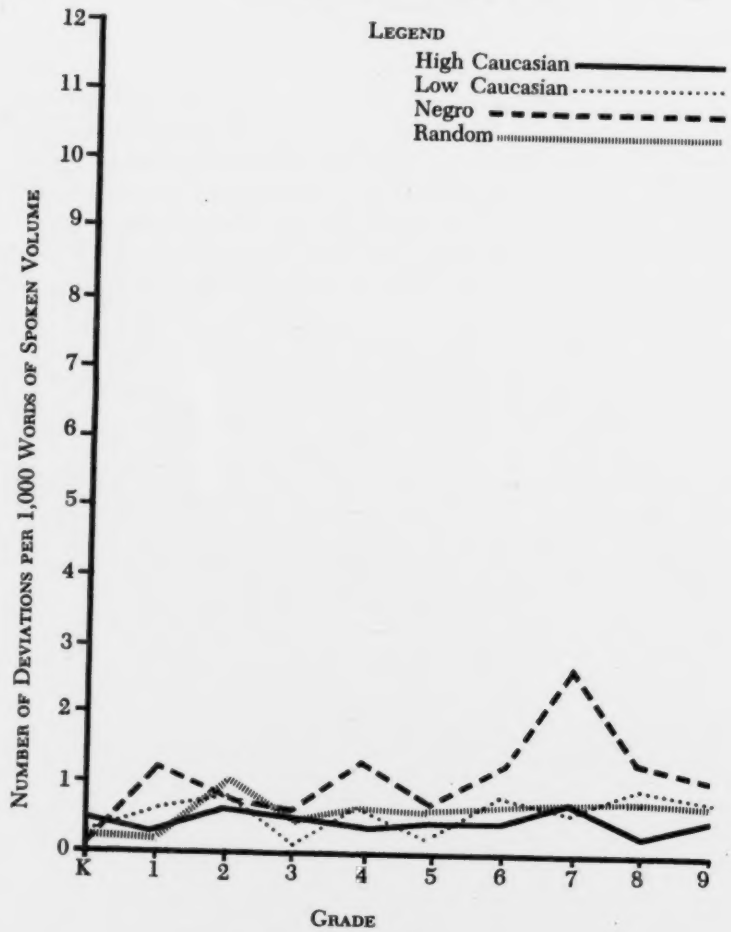
The abrupt increase by the Negro group in grade seven seems to be the result of a large number of Negro subjects constantly repeating phrases such as *you know*. This phrase (*you know*) seems to be a junior high school phenomenon among many subjects; however, the process of subtracting the *two extreme* figures from all deviations eliminated an increase of this sort by the Random group and both Caucasian groups. (See Appendix, page 68, for the methodology on adjusted arithmetic means.) Actually, the worst offender with repetitious *you know* phrases was a boy in the Low Caucasian group. In the eighth grade he used this phrase *unnecessarily* a total of 64 times. In other words, he actually said *you know* over 128 times in a transcript of 1,314 words.

The use of such phrases may very well be the response to linguistic inadequacy by persons who recognize the need to communicate better but lack the skills to do so. Whatever the reason, the problem is not one of usage but of judgment and skill in communication. It may very well be closely related to psychological and social security as well as to language proficiency.

FIGURE 12

Unnecessary Repetition

NUMBER OF 4B DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

Other Problems

5A: Nonstandard connection (prepositions)

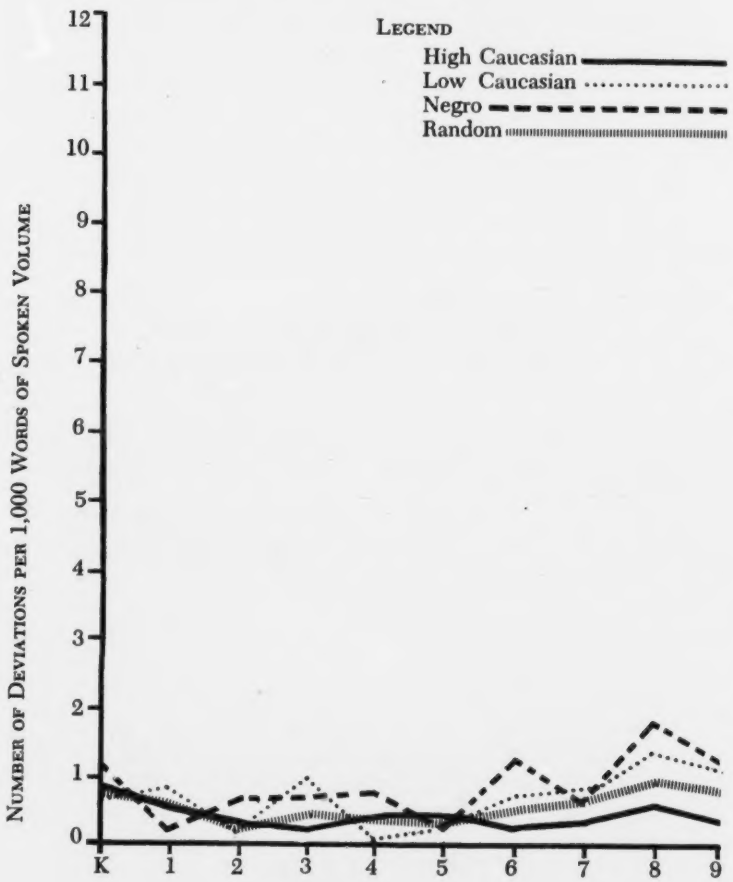
EXAMPLE: Listen *at* (to) him.
We drove *to* (from) Utah to Texas.
Bud went back *at* (to) his home.
Some children are *in* (on) bicycles.
He had no control *to* (of) the boat.

COMMENT: This category shows an erratic pattern and is quite minor for all four groups from kindergarten through grade five. For the two low groups after grade five there is a slight upward trend which seems to be a result of using a higher average number of words per unit —thereby using more prepositional phrases and increasing the probability of a deviation. It is certainly not an important problem for any of these subjects. Bryant classifies *different than* as standard usage.[12]

FIGURE 13

Nonstandard Connection (Prepositions)

NUMBER OF 5A DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

5B: Nonstandard connection (conjunctions)

EXAMPLE: He went in the room *when* (where) she was.
I wish *if* (that) I don't die or anything.
She wanted to go to the party, *but* (and) so she went.
His mother told him not to cry, *and* (but) he did.

COMMENT: This deviation was insignificant for all four groups and therefore has not been presented graphically. (See Appendix, Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8.) However, it should be mentioned that the subjects in this study use conjunctions (other than *and* and *but*) infrequently in oral speech.

6A: Nonstandard modification (adjectival)

EXAMPLE: He saw *a* airplane.
That girl is *more pretty* than the other one.
I would like to play with the *youngest* of those two girls.
He went home because he felt *badly*.

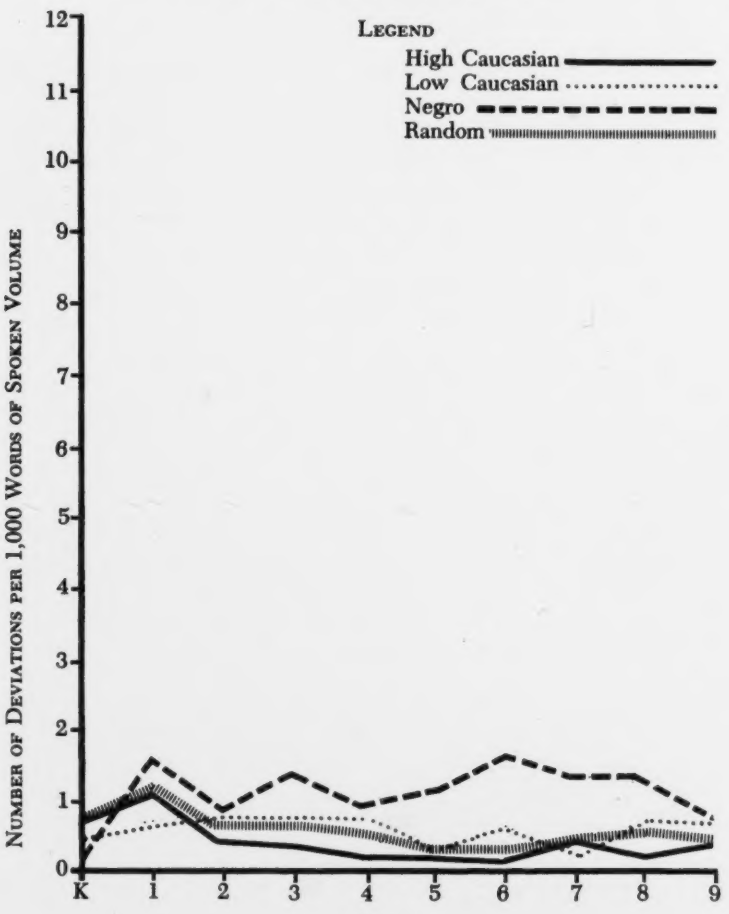
COMMENT: Problems with adjectives are relatively minor for all four groups. The incidence of this deviation in the Negro group is usually concerned with the use of *a* and *an*.

Bryant and others consider the use of the superlative rather than the comparative for two a fact of standard English usage. Usage is about equally divided on "felt *bad*" and "felt *badly*."[13]

FIGURE 14

Nonstandard Modification (Adjectival)

NUMBER OF 6A DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

6B: Nonstandard modification (adverbial)

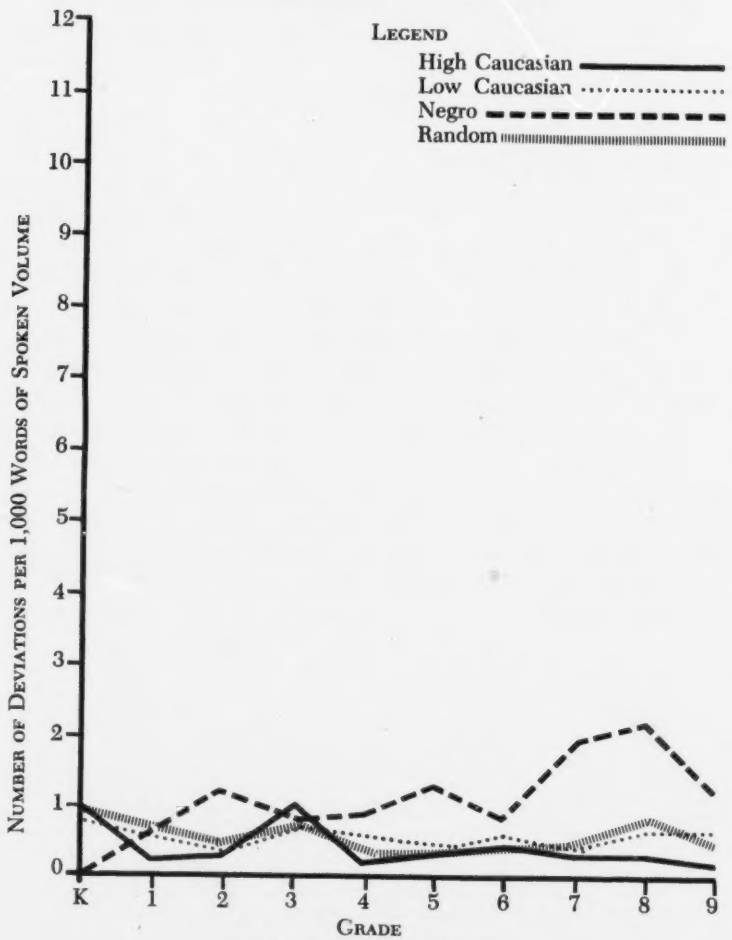
EXAMPLE: I *sometime* watch the fights.
This girl knew that man very *much*.
I guess he arrived *quick*.
That lady treated her *cruel*.
I can swim *good* enough.

COMMENT: This is a relatively minor problem for the Random group as well as for both Caucasian groups. For the Negro group the problem is not serious. However, during the later years (grade four and onward) the members of the Negro group have a steady and persistent problem whereas all other groups bring this deviation under control. The main difficulty encountered by the Negro group is the omission of the *s* at the end of the word *sometimes*.

FIGURE 15

Nonstandard Modification (Adverbial)

NUMBER OF 6B DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

7: Nonstandard use of noun forms

EXAMPLE: I see two *mans.*
The people are all wearing *masses* (masks).
The movie was a western about the *calvary* (cavalry).
The *sharps* (sharks) are jumping out of the water.
A *police* (policeman) comes and asks what the trouble is.
That little girl is holding a *mice.*

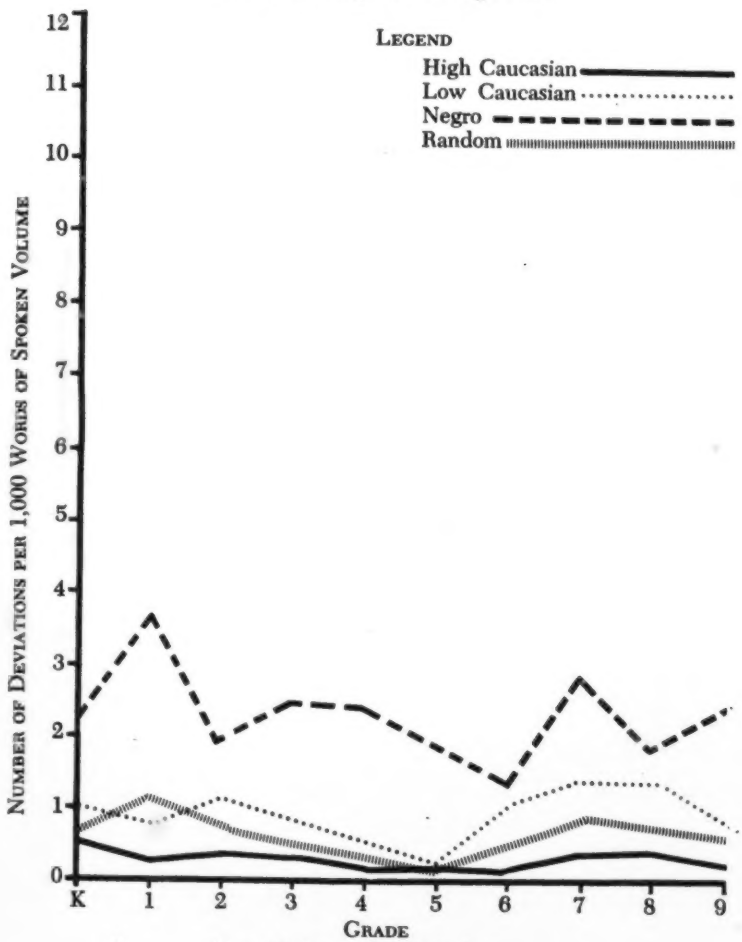
COMMENT: The High Caucasian group never has any difficulty with nouns. The Low Caucasian group and the Random group show little difficulty but exhibit an upward trend after grade five. The Negro group shows a more persistent problem from kindergarten through grade nine.

In later years (after grade five) all groups exhibit a different problem from that encountered in earlier years. They succeed in conquering such simple words as *men* rather than *mans,* but they increase their difficulties with more complicated words. For example, they will say *calvary* when they mean *cavalry* or *masses* when they mean *masks.* These difficulties, of course, vary considerably for each subject and seem to indicate that the subject is extending his vocabulary without having the more difficult nouns clearly in his grasp. They may also be due to difficulties of pronunciation; *sks* in *masks* is not easy to pronounce. It is possible to view this category as one of vocabulary inaccuracy rather than one of standard usage. It often appears to be a hopeful sign of attempted vocabulary enlargement not quite under precise control. Probably all learners go through this stage.

FIGURE 16

Nonstandard Use of Noun Forms

NUMBER OF 7 DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

8: Double negatives

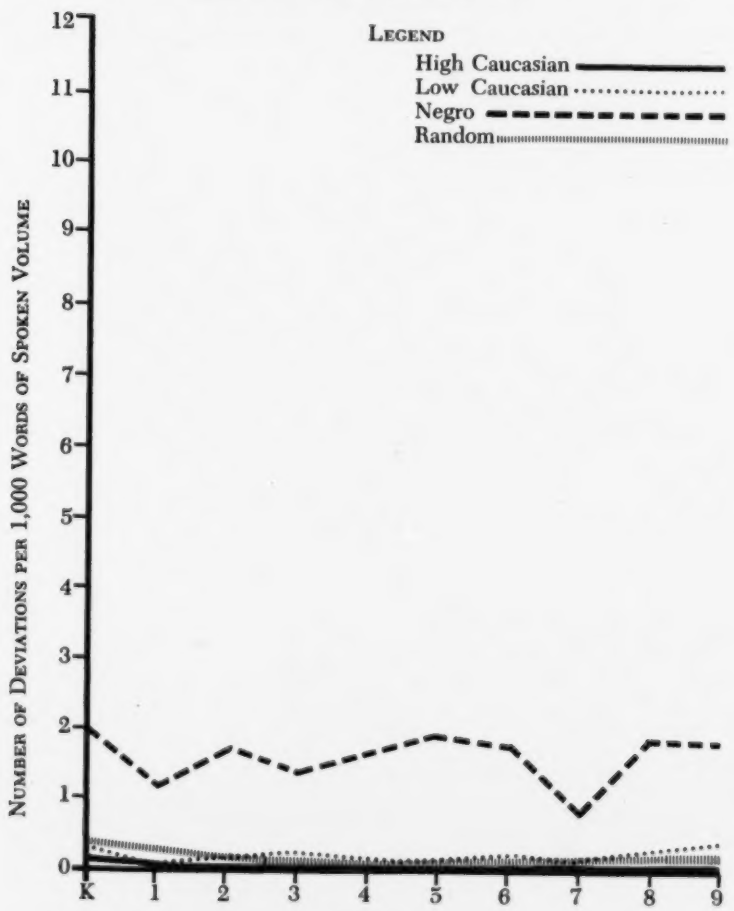
EXAMPLE: I don't know *nothing* about that.
We don't have *no books* at our house.
There wasn't *nobody* coming to visit him.
I don't *never* want to die.

COMMENT: The Random group and both Caucasian groups have almost no difficulty whatever with double negatives. The Negro group, however, has a persistent problem with all examples illustrated, and this problem continues at about the same level from kindergarten through grade nine.

FIGURE 17

Double Negatives

NUMBER OF 8 DEVIATIONS PER 1,000 WORDS OF SPOKEN VOLUME
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

9: Nonstandard use of possessives

EXAMPLE: That is the *girl* hand.
They're bandaging a *dog* leg.
We ride in my *mother* car.

COMMENT: The incident for this deviation is virtually nil for all four groups and as a result it has not been presented graphically. (See Appendix, Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8.)

CONCLUSIONS

This has been an examination of the nonstandard speech of four different groups of subjects during the years of their schooling from kindergarten through grade nine. All four groups have been drawn from a larger sample of 338 children chosen to represent a range of socioeconomic background, intellectual ability, ethnic variety, and equal in number of boys and girls. The Random group was drawn from this larger group as were the Caucasian group high in language proficiency, the Caucasian group low in language proficiency, and a Negro group, likewise low in language proficiency.

The examples of nonstandard oral usage—except for pronunciation, which was not considered—have been classified, counted, and compared. In Figures 1 through 17, where these nonstandard usages have been drawn to the same scale, the results have been depicted. What conclusions, useful to teachers and others who determine the content of education, may be drawn from this examination of the subjects' oral language?

Subjects Speaking Standard English

For those children not handicapped by social dialect, most difficulties fall into five categories, occurring in the following order of frequency:

inconsistency in the use of tense
careless omission of words (excluding omission of auxiliaries)
lack of syntactic clarity
  ambiguous placement of words, phrases, and clauses
  awkward and incoherent arrangements of expression
confusing use of pronouns
trouble with agreement of subject and verb when using *there is, there are, there was,* and *there were*

It is immediately apparent that all these problems transcend usage. They are matters of sensitivity to clarity and precision of communication rather than problems of habit or usage. This is not at all what the researcher had expected. He had assumed that problems of usage—such as nonstandard verb forms and agreement of verb with subject (*It don't,*

I would've took him, I seen it)—would constitute the major difficulty for most pupils who did not speak a social class dialect. Exactly the opposite proves to be the case. On every figure representing a category that tallies matters of habitual usage, the frequencies adhere to the horizontal line representing zero. Instead the major problems occur in categories related to clarity of expression. Even the confusion over *there is* and *there are,* properly understood for what it is, may be viewed as a problem in thoughtful arrangement and anticipation of sentence elements rather than a problem of proper habits. Bryant finds an overwhelming proportion for *there is* when the first member of the compound subject is singular (as in "There is the boy and his sisters.").[14]

How to label this distinction between usage and clarity of communication proves to be a problem. To most people, the term *usage* denotes the habitual ways an individual uses oral language, ways that are spontaneous rather than carefully chosen and considered. Usage fits very well such categories as subject-verb agreement, case of pronouns, and the use of verb forms in the past and past perfect tenses, but it applies much less appropriately to consistency of verb tense or skilled arrangement of the syntactical elements of sentences. For these latter problems in this research, the term *rhetoric* was used initially. However, rhetoric includes a connotation of overall artistry—the art of organizing logically and effectively the total structure of expression. Those who read early drafts of this manuscript considered rhetoric too large a concept to describe the problems of the standard-speaking subjects.

To avoid these issues, we will use the term *coherence* to designate the major difficulties of pupils who come from homes where standard English prevails. Such pupils in this study, except for those few whose scores fall distant from the mean, do not need drill or help with usage. What they do need is instruction concerned with increasing their coherence and effectiveness.

An empirical way to distinguish between the two kinds of oral language difficulties has been suggested by Robert F. Hogan, Associate Executive Secretary, National Council of Teachers of English. The simpler and less troublesome problems of usage fall within a single communication unit, e.g., "The calf don't want his milk." The more complex and persistent problems span two or more such units, e.g., shift of verb tense and faulty reference to an antecedent.

Subjects Speaking a Social Class Dialect

For children whose language is influenced by a social class dialect, a more complicated pattern of difficulties emerges. In this study, only one group, the Negro, has been studied, but the results lead one to believe that a similar complicated set of problems would be revealed for many Oriental, Hawaiian (Pidgin), Spanish-speaking, Cajun, and Appalachian subjects. For the Negro subjects in this study, what are the most troublesome difficulties in oral language? Their difficulties fall into ten categories in the following order of frequency:

lack of agreement of subject and verb, third person singular (other than forms of the verb *to be*)
omission of auxiliary verbs (especially those formed from the verb *to be*)
inconsistency in the use of tense
nonstandard use of verb forms
lack of agreement of subject and verb while using forms of the verb *to be*
careless omission of words (excluding omission of auxiliaries)
nonstandard use of pronouns
nonstandard use of noun forms
double negatives
omission of the verb *to be*

Of this list five out of the first six represent difficulties with verbs. Highly dramatic are the gains these Negro children make in conquering the problems of verb-subject agreement in the third person singular, the use of auxiliary verbs, and omission of needed words. (See Figures 1, 4, and 11.) Their persistent problem, one which does *not* show such a dramatic conquest, is the use of the verb *to be*. Actually this problem affects other categories and, in ways not at first apparent, causes the Negro child's main difficulties in achieving standard use of auxiliary verbs as well as some of his difficulties with consistency in verb tense.

For these Negro subjects both usage and coherence are involved in their oral language problems, but habitual use of standard forms is clearly a problem whereas it is not one for the Caucasian groups. For the Negro eight of the ten categories are problems of usage. Only consistency of tense and careless omission represent problems of a larger order. These children do indeed come from speech communities in

which social class dialect rather than standard English is used. In ten years of schooling they make enormous improvement in subject-verb agreement and in using auxiliaries, yet almost no improvement in using the verb *to be* appropriately or in standardizing the verb forms. Except that their problem is more acute, they have the same difficulties as other subjects in confusing uses of pronouns and inconsistency of verb tense, particularly as they increase the length of their expression units in grades six, seven, eight, and nine.

In the categories that show difficulties but without such crucial frequencies—nonstandard use of noun forms and double negatives—the Negro subjects make almost no improvement. The double negative does almost disappear in grade seven, but as new complicated communication problems and larger units of expression require attention in grades eight and nine, the problem of the double negative springs back into place again.

Although this study has not been concerned with clear articulation of speech, one matter should be noted as a subject for future study. Anyone listening to the oral language of the Negro subjects would agree that many word endings and beginnings are missing in Negro dialect. These subjects are also uncertain when to use an *s* to end a verb and when not to use it, as in the following:

> My mother *look* at television a lot.
> We *likes* to ride our bikes in the park.

They tend to omit the required *s* on the third person singular verb and to add a superfluous *s* to verbs which agree with subjects not requiring an *s* to end the verb. They also confuse *a* and *an*, *sometime* and *sometimes*, and the phonemes *d*, *t*, and *th*. They have not acquired all the phonemes of standard English and do not, apparently, hear any difference between phonemes they use in nonstandard fashion and the corresponding phonemes in standard speech. These phonemic differences have been carefully described by Pedersen.[15] In this study, they have merely been noted, but no rigorous study has been made of them.

All Subjects

In some categories, *neither Negro nor Caucasian subjects* reveal any serious problems. Such categories are the following:

agreement between subject and predicate other than in the third person singular
connection through prepositions and conjunctions
modification with adjectives and adverbs
use of *that* instead of *who* as a relative pronoun referring to persons
nonstandard use of possessives

However, in the oral language of all these subjects, syntactic connection through conjunctions is practically limited to *and* and *but*. As the subjects begin to use more complex and lengthy units of expression in high school, the problem may change. This may also apply to the use of *that* and *who* if the increase in subordination, notable in grades seven through nine, continues. Because *that* can be accepted as standard, the problem does not seem to be one for instruction and drill but rather one to be noted as an example of disputed usage.

Although the prestige dialect groups have low frequencies on most of these categories, one must not forget that these figures are charted on mean scores. This indicates that even in the High Caucasian group there will be some individuals one or more standard deviations above the mean who will need individual instruction even when the group as a whole does not. The practice, so common among weaker teachers, of drilling all pupils on the same skill is not supported by this research.

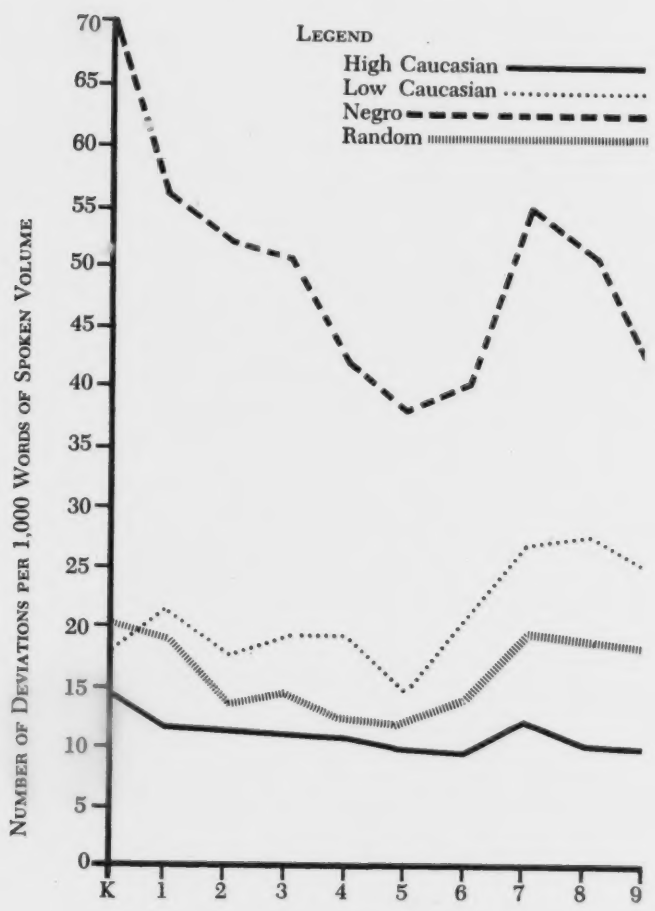
Total Deviations

So far, in examining the subjects' problems of using standard spoken English, we have avoided combining the categories. Can anything be gained by looking at the totality of deviations from the prestige dialect? A summation of all the separate categories, most of which have been shown on individual graphs, is shown in Figure 18.[16] As can be seen, the Negro group shows steady improvement through grade five but then abruptly increases its difficulties, not achieving the fifth grade level again until grade nine. The Low Caucasian group shows a similar abrupt increase after grade five and *remains* at a high level through grade nine. The High Caucasian group shows a slight but steady improvement until grade six and then moves upward slightly in grade seven. For the Ran-

dom group as well as for both low groups, the dip in the curves followed by an abrupt upward trend in the total number of deviations seems to indicate that as complexity of sentence structure and total volume of spoken language both increase, there is a *more than proportional* probability of difficulty with certain problems—problems of clarity and precision, not problems of habitual usage. In other words, it is not logical to assume that the Random group and both low groups suddenly grow more inept in the use of language after grade five. The research clearly shows that as they speak with more complexity and in longer units of expression, their difficulties with coherence increase.

FIGURE 18

Total Number of Deviations per 1,000 Words of Spoken Volume
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

Total Deviations Apart from Social Class Dialect Problems

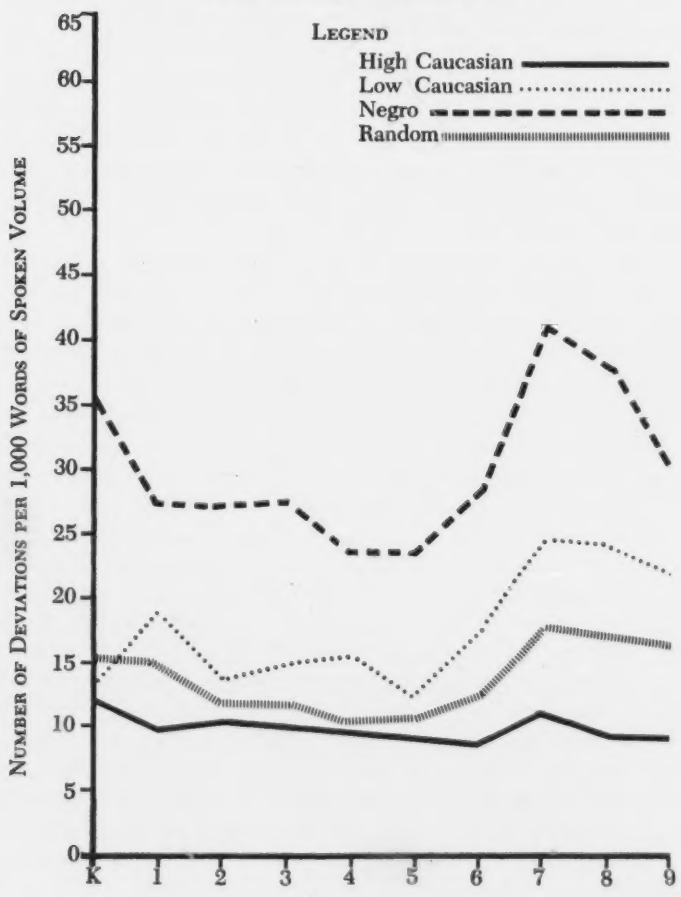
Certain departures from the prestige dialect, departures that are obviously a tremendous problem for the Negro group, represent a minor problem for *both* Caucasian groups. Specifically, these are the categories concerned with (1) agreement of the subject and verb in the third person singular, (2) omission of the verb *to be*, (3) omission of auxiliary verbs, (4) nonstandard use of verb forms, (5) double negatives. Figure 19 shows the result in total deviations when these five categories are subtracted on a year-by-year basis for all four groups.

Comparing Figure 18 to Figure 19 makes it obvious that the Low Caucasian group performs better than the Negro group in either case (with dialect categories retained or with dialect categories subtracted). However, on the total deviations the magnitude of difference between the two graphs is very great. When deviations which are primarily cultural are subtracted, all four groups move much closer together. In other words, the Negro group seems to be expending much of its energy *in overcoming problems the Caucasian subjects never encounter.*

FIGURE 19

Total Number of Deviations per 1,000 Words of Spoken Volume with Deviations of Ethnic Origin (1A, 1D, 1E, 1F, 8) Subtracted

High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups
Grades Kindergarten through Nine



N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

A Concluding Statement

Because many English verbs form their principal parts irregularly, those occurring most frequently in English speech will always require high instructional priority for individual pupils who have not mastered them. The irregular verbs frequently used in nonstandard form are *lie, see, break, come, go, run, take, do, give, write, ring, sit, drink,* and *begin.* Other irregular verbs, less frequent in use but crucial when they do occur, are such verbs as *sneak, drown, sing, know, throw.* Individual pupils, but not whole classes of pupils, will need help if they are to use the standard forms of such verbs. Another troublesome irregularity of the English language is the change occurring in the third person singular agreement of the verb with its subject (I do, you do, he *does,* we do, you do, they do).

For those Negro pupils who speak a social class dialect, the overwhelming problem is standard use of the verb *to be:* omission as a linking verb; omission as an auxiliary with other verbs; agreement with subject; unusual uses. Other persistent problems of usage for this group are case of pronouns and the double negative.

Almost all the pupils whose parents speak informal standard English have little need of drill on usage. What they do need is help on coherence, and such help cannot be achieved through a drillbook approach. Improvement would seem most possible in situations where pupils are concerned with expressing thoughts and feelings so others will understand them. Such instruction, when successful, alternates skillfully between two polarities: one is the motivated class or group discussion, panel, or brief informal speech (usually impromptu or extempore, whether "sharing" in grade one or a "report" in grade nine); the other is the focused attention upon the strategies of coherence, using living examples, material just uttered, models, and examples. The tape recorder is invaluable for such instruction. For the pupil to become aware of how the same coherences occur in writing, listening, and reading would seem equally helpful. Here is the point at which all the language arts reinforce instruction in any one aspect of language. Dialect speakers need help with coherence, in addition to their need for changing nonstandard usage.

Whenever usage drill occurs, whether for dialect speakers or for the nontypical standard speaker, other research has shown that oral drill is more effective than workbook drills.

In societies organized for stability through caste and class, language is one means of maintaining the *status quo*. Even in a fluid society such as ours, where individual worth and aspiration are intended to count for more than fortunate or unfortunate birth, language still operates to preserve social class distinctions and remains a major barrier to crossing social lines. In a democracy schools should assist all other institutions in making equality of opportunity a reality. However, to do this teachers must begin to see how language and social caste are linked and why many people are inclined to condemn rather than accept the language of the least favored economic groups in any culture. On attitudes concerning language, teachers can learn much from sociology. "We fear lower class speech and are inclined to give it no quarter. The more precarious our social status in the higher classes—that is, the closer we are to the line that divides the middle from the lower classes or the more recent our ascent from the lower strata—the more insistent we are on the purity of our linguistic credentials."[17]

Realizing that human worth cannot be measured by the language or dialect a man uses, teachers will be more likely to help children acquire standard English without making them ashamed of their own language. Such change—not "improvement"—would seem to be much more possible in situations where drill and directed effort were oral and where they were not separated from language used to express ideas, attitudes, and values of genuine concern to the learners. Not only improved habits but also awareness of how listeners are helped or hindered by one's language proves to be the need of most learners. To improve language ability a pupil must apply whatever is studied to situations in which he has something to say, a deep desire to say it, and someone to whom he genuinely wants to say it.

NOTES

1. page 2: The 338 subjects used in this study are those described in *The Language of Elementary School Children: A Study of the Use and Control of Language, Effectiveness in Communication, and the Relationships among Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Listening.* Research Report No. 1 (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1963). They were a stratified sample chosen to represent a larger universe of children. Eleven kindergarten classes were matched with family backgrounds typical of the city of Oakland, California. Thus subjects included a range of family status from definitely poor economic circumstances in the industrial areas down by the Bay through the middle class areas up to the more favored socioeconomic circumstances of the hill-top districts. The evidence on socioeconomic status for the subjects in this research places the median at middle class. For these subjects the median score is IV, which is also the median of the Minnesota Occupational Scale.

However, stratification was not tied solely to socioeconomic status. The choice of subjects also included representativeness on the bases of sex, racial background, and spread of intellectual ability. Care was taken to avoid any unique or unusual factor of selection. The sample provides clear evidence of representing the school population of Oakland. Oakland, in turn, is assumed to be typical of the urban center in twentieth century America: a population varying in religion, race, national background, and socioeconomic conditions. Some subjects were lost each year of the study, but by grade nine there were still 220 pupils remaining in the group, a remarkably high degree of retention for a period of ten years.

2. page 2: The communication unit is identical to the T-unit used by Kellogg W. Hunt in his analysis of written English. See his article, "A Synopsis of Clause-to-Sentence Length Factors," *English Journal*, 54, 4 (April, 1965), 300-309. See also Kellogg W. Hunt, *Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels.* Research Report No. 3 (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965).

3. page 3: Charles Carpenter Fries, *American English Grammar* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1940), p. 13.

4. page 3: All evidence dealing with departures from accepted

usage is based upon taped transcripts of oral language. Written samples from each of the subjects are available but have not yet been analyzed for use of conventions in writing.

5. page 4: The criterion of including only those subjects on whom complete data were available for ten full years was used in order to avoid substituting one subject for another as a result of the normal attrition rate in the overall study. (The number of subjects in kindergarten was 338; in grade nine, 220.) Repeated substitution might allow individual idiosyncrasies of particular subjects to affect the data grossly.

6. page 10: See, for instance, George Philip Krapp, "The English of the Negro," *American Mercury*, II (June, 1924), 190-195.

7. page 17: W. W. Charters, *Minimum Essentials in Elementary Language and Grammar: A Second Report*. Part I, Sixteenth Yearbook (Chicago, Ill.: National Society for the Study of Education, 1917).

8. page 22: Correct use of pronouns before the age of two is rare. Between two and six, most children are busy straightening out the pronoun. See A. Gesell, *The First Five Years of Life* (London: Metheun, 1941), p. 199, and A. F. Watts, *The Language and Mental Development of Children* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1948), pp. 40-41 and 45.

9. page 24: Margaret M. Bryant, *Current American Usage* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1962), pp. 174-176.

10. page 24: Basil Bernstein, "Language and Social Class," *British Journal of Sociology*, XI (1960), 271-276. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.).

11. page 24: Loban, *op. cit.* (See Note 1, page 59.)

12. page 36: Bryant, *op cit.*, pp. 69-70. (See Note 9, above.)

13. page 38: Bryant, *op. cit.*, pp 35-36. (See Note 9, above.)

14. page 48: Bryant, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14. (See Note 9, above.)

15. page 50: Lee A. Pederson, "Non-Standard Negro Speech in Chicago," *Non-Standard Speech and the Teaching of English*. Language Information Series, 2 (Washington, D. C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1964).

16. page 51: See Appendix, Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8, for the adjusted means on these deviations as well as on the deviations so minor that they were not presented graphically.

17. page 57: Werner Cohn, "On the Language of Lower Class Children," *School Review*, Winter, 1959, pp. 35-40.

APPENDIX

In trying to find a method for dealing with language problems as they occur in individual subjects, the research encountered one immediate problem.[1] The individual range in volume of spoken language is quite wide. Because of the nature of language itself, this creates a statistical problem: short simple sentences or one-word answers tend to reduce the probability of usage deviations. In fact, only two subjects, both from the kindergarten year and both speaking very briefly, had "perfection" in usage.

As the statistical work progressed, however, it became obvious that each of the three selected subgroups was clearly a homogeneous unit. The means and medians on various measures indicate that the High Caucasian group is consistently superior to the other two groups on all measures and by approximately the same degree. In addition, the Low Caucasian group and the Negro group reveal not only this consistent relationship to the High Caucasian group, but also a consistent relationship to each other: the Low Caucasian group invariably has less difficulty with standard usage than does the Negro group.

The Random group, of course, is not a homogeneous unit in the same sense as those groups selected on the basis of ethnic background and degree of proficiency with language. However, as one would expect, the means and medians of the Random group typically fall between those of the High Caucasian group and the Low Caucasian group on all the various measures undertaken.

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[1]One method of dealing with language deviations would be to take each transcript for each subject and compare the number of times a particular deviation actually occurs to the number of times the same deviation *could occur* in the language uttered by the subject. In past research this has been called the Error Quotient. However, the present study deals with 21 different language deviations as they occur for 113 individual subjects, each of whom has 10 transcripts for the years 1953-1962. In gross terms, the Error Quotient would require 21 separate word-by-word tallies on over 550,000 words. This in turn would require a prohibitive amount of time and money. Furthermore, the Error Quotient *masks* the data by reporting the *same quotient* for such diverse examples as the following:

. . . one error in agreement of subject and verb out of two possibilities
. . . five errors in pronoun case out of ten possibilities
. . . ten errors in omission of auxiliary verb out of twenty possibilities.

Among the examples of these consistent relationships are the following:

1) The High Caucasian group shows a considerably higher mean and median for total words in communication units than either the Low Caucasian group or the Negro group. In turn, the Low Caucasian group shows a slight superiority to the Negro group on both means and medians except for the medians in grades two and three where both are virtually identical. The Random group falls between the High and Low Caucasian groups for all years on both the mean and median. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1

Total Number of Words in Communication Units

High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups[1]

Grades Kindergarten through Nine

Grade	Mean				Median			
	High (Caucasian)	*Low (Caucasian)*	*Low (Negro)*	*Random*	*High (Caucasian)*	*Low (Caucasian)*	*Low (Negro)*	*Random*
Kinder-garten	597.71	472.76	461.05	504.55	569	451	400	492
One	639.52	452.86	428.52	502.83	558	435	308	467
Two	849.43	634.52	620.24	734.41	770	538	539	634
Three	973.38	602.90	528.48	721.53	964	549	548	592
Four	1303.71	845.05	.643.90	947.12	1215	801	594	811
Five	1396.33	1138.52	921.29	1219.63	1255	1059	862	1079
Six	1824.00	1086.86	998.19	1322.64	1722	976	947	1190
Seven	1701.43	1333.05	1123.62	1375.34	1650	1339	974	1326
Eight	1539.57	1313.00	1238.29	1454.40	1507	1159	1142	1195
Nine	1751.29	1348.52	1243.90	1534.66	1684	1198	1054	1322

[1] N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

2) On average words per communication unit the situation is identical—a large measure of superiority by the High Caucasian group, a relatively slight lead by the Low Caucasian group over the Negro group.[2] Again, the Random group typically falls between the High and Low Caucasian groups although the median does show several instances in which the Random group and the Low Caucasian group show an almost identical average words per unit. (See Table 2.)

3) The four groups maintain the same positions in respect to one another. Measures of I. Q., of writing proficiency, of subordinating connectives, and of standard reading scores all show a consistent relationship among the groups. (See Table 3.) As can be seen in this table, one or two subjects in each group are at the extremes on each of these measures of performance (the total range), and this accounts for a slight overlapping. However, the medians clearly differentiate among the groups on each of these measures (with the exception of writing which has only five categories). Thus it can be seen that the teachers' ratings, the method by which the three groups were selected, clearly differentiate among the groups, and it is concluded that these ratings are a valid method of selecting those subjects high or low in language proficiency.

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[2]The average words per communication unit is a measure of considerable significance. Admittedly, a high average of words per communication unit could conceivably be only a measure of verbosity: more words but no increase in meaningful verbal communication. However, throughout this research, a high average for words per unit has been inevitably coupled with increased complexity of sentence structure. Thus the supremacy of the High Caucasian group on this measure is of even greater significance than it may at first appear, for, as has been shown previously, this group has far fewer nonstandard deviations than either of the other two groups *in spite of the fact that members of the High Caucasian group use greater complexity of sentence structure.*

TABLE 2

Average Number of Words per Communication Unit
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups[1]
Grades Kindergarten through Nine

Grade	Mean				Median			
	High (Caucasian)	*Low (Caucasian)*	*Low (Negro)*	*Random*	*High (Caucasian)*	*Low (Caucasian)*	*Low (Negro)*	*Random*
Kindergarten	5.86	4.93	4.28	5.31	6.34	5.33	4.22	5.21
One	7.01	5.53	4.88	6.02	7.00	5.96	4.94	6.06
Two	7.04	6.02	5.54	6.54	7.08	6.32	5.66	6.65
Three	8.05	6.70	5.80	6.93	7.61	6.91	6.26	6.89
Four	8.79	7.45	6.44	7.83	8.97	7.68	6.68	7.71
Five	8.84	7.29	6.89	8.10	9.01	7.43	7.09	8.15
Six	9.70	7.62	7.58	8.49	9.80	7.69	7.51	8.33
Seven	10.55	8.80	8.01	9.35	10.78	8.91	8.19	9.22
Eight	11.02	9.24	8.30	9.50	10.61	9.24	8.33	9.56
Nine	10.89	8.88	8.56	9.70	10.66	8.88	8.45	9.40

[1] N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

TABLE 3

Median Scores and Range on Selected Measures at Grade Six[1]
High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups[2]

Type of Measure	*High (Caucasian)*		*Low (Caucasian)*		*Negro*		*Random*	
	Median	*Range*	*Median*	*Range*	*Median*	*Range*[3]	*Median*	*Range*
Teacher's rating	4.14	3.97 to 4.56	2.65	2.11 to 2.89	2.32	1.75 to 2.60	3.42	2.20 to 4.56
I.Q.	120	109 to 143	96	55 to 113	86	60 to 112	110	55 to 143
Reading status (above or below chronological age)	+4 yrs. and 2 mos.	+1 yr. and 1 mo. to +5 yrs. and 2 mos.	−0 yrs. and 8 mos.	−5 yrs. and 0 mos. to +1 yr. and 4 mos.	−2 yrs. and 0 mos.	−4 yrs. and 8 mos. to +1 yr. and 7 mos.	+0 yrs. and 2 mos.	−5 yrs. and 0 mos. to +4 yrs. and 10 mos.
Writing	II	I to II	III	II to V	III	II to V	II	I to V
Use of subordinating connectives	46	39 to 49	31	0 to 39	19	0 to 38	41	0 to 48

[1]The maximum possible scores for the measures shown are as follows: teacher's rating = 5.00; I.Q. = indeterminate; reading = +5 years and 2 months for subjects in grade six; writing = I; use of subordinating connectives = 50.
[2]N = 21 for each ethnically selected group; N = 50 for the Random group.
[3]One subject in the Negro group has consistently higher scores than the other twenty subjects in that group. If this subject had been excluded, the upper limit of the range would have fallen considerably closer to the median.

4) Lastly, the socioeconomic status of the subjects is precisely what one would expect: regardless of ethnic background, those ranked *high* in language proficiency are of predominantly high socioeconomic status; those ranked *low* in language proficiency are of predominantly low socioeconomic status; those selected at random show a wide range of language ability and a wide range of socioeconomic status. (See Table 4.)

TABLE 4

Socioeconomic Status at Grade Nine

High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, and Random Groups[1]

Socio-economic Status	*Number of Subjects Classified as High (Caucasian)*	*Number of Subjects Classified as Low (Caucasian)*	*Number of Subjects Classified as Low (Negro)*	*Number of Subjects Classified as Random*
I	10	1	0	5
II	5	6	0	17
III	5	2	0	14
IV	0	3	1	3
V	0	6	3	5
VI	1	3	13	5
VII	0	0	4	1
TOTAL	21	21	21	50

[1]N = 21 for each selected group.
N = 50 for the Random group.

In addition to the evidence indicating that the three selected groups are homogeneous units and that the Random group is typical of a cross section of the population, it was also found that the arithmetic means on the twenty-one separate language deviations and on the number of deviations per equated number of words spoken revealed a consistent relationship. On appropriateness of English usage, the High Caucasian group is typically far superior to all other groups; the Random group falls in the center; the Low Caucasian group falls below the Random group; and the Negro group is last. The *medians* also showed consistent relationships, but the use of medians was ruled out because the High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, and Random groups often had a median of zero on any given deviation for any given year. This was not true of the Negro group, and as a result *any proportional adjustment of the data would have produced fluctuations in the Negro group which were not actually in the data.*[3]

[3]Trying to deal with zero quantities is one of those frustrating items all researchers inevitably encounter. The problem basically is that 2 x 0 or 10 x 0 or ½ x 0 all come out to be zero.

With the use of medians ruled out, the question was then the following: would the use of the arithmetic mean possibly allow a few extreme numbers to skew the data and make the results nonrepresentative? In other words, on any given deviation from accepted usage, would several subjects "have a bad day"? Or would they possibly get tangled in repetitions of the same sentence and speak the same deviation an inordinate number of times? To guard against this possibility, it was decided to subtract the deviations of the *extreme 10 percent* of the subjects before proportionally adjusting the data.[4] In short, the method of analysis decided upon was to eliminate the extremes, equate the data so that it would be comparable from year to year and subgroup to subgroup, and then to present the arithmetic mean of each particular subgroup.[5] The method used therefore gives a profile for a *typical* subject in a particular category (High Caucasian, Low Caucasian, Negro, or Random).

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[4]The subject who had the greatest *total* number of deviations was *not* eliminated. The process was to eliminate 10 percent or the *two highest numbers on each individual deviation* (in the case of the Random group this meant the five highest numbers or 10 percent of the fifty Random cases) on a year-by-year, deviation-by-deviation basis for each group. To lend even further comparability, the two highest totals for number of words in communication units were also subtracted. Again, for the Random group, the five highest totals were subtracted in order to deal effectively with 10 percent of the extremes for each group.

[5]Before actually deciding upon the method of presentation to be used, the data were analyzed and graphed, using six different approaches: (1) developing mean factors in order to equate all groups to the High Caucasian group; (2) dividing the equated data by average words per unit; (3) developing mean factors to equate each group to 1,000 words of spoken volume; (4) dividing the equated data of 1,000 words of spoken volume by average words per unit; (5) developing mean factors to equate each group to 1,000 words of spoken volume, after first subtracting extreme values for words in units and individual deviations for each group on a year-by-year basis; (6) dividing the resulting equated data by average words in units. *Each method of analysis not only showed consistent general trends but such a remarkable degree of similarity that it was actually difficult to differentiate between the graphic presentation of a particular deviation when one method of approach was compared to another.* For this reason it was felt that the fifth method indicated would be the best method to present: it is clear and straightforward without undue statistical manipulation and also has the characteristic of smoothing off some of the peaks caused by a few extreme cases.

TABLE 5

Adjusted Mean on Nonstandard Usage by High Caucasian Group per 1,000 Words of Spoken Volume

Grades Kindergarten through Nine

N = 21

Type of Problem	*Grade*									
	Kinder-garten	*One*	*Two*	*Three*	*Four*	*Five*	*Six*	*Seven*	*Eight*	*Nine*
1A	0.09	0.18	0.14	0.24	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00
1B	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1C	2.28	1.86	2.40	1.83	0.85	0.45	0.49	0.46	0.60	0.40
1D	0.30	0.27	0.14	0.06	0.04	0.08	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.03
1E	0.40	0.54	0.42	0.41	0.22	0.25	0.27	0.23	0.30	0.27
1F	1.28	0.97	0.42	0.36	0.63	0.45	0.24	0.55	0.30	0.23
1G	0.70	0.97	0.97	1.00	2.55	2.52	1.89	1.74	1.20	1.60
2A	1.39	0.70	1.31	0.47	0.67	0.77	0.67	0.92	0.45	0.43
2B	0.09	0.79	0.34	0.76	0.54	1.06	0.73	0.88	0.90	0.83
2C	0.09	0.27	0.14	0.53	0.54	0.57	0.49	1.87	1.10	0.73
3A	0.09	0.35	0.61	0.53	0.45	0.32	0.82	1.02	1.28	1.13
3B	1.49	0.44	0.27	0.53	0.45	0.69	0.52	0.55	0.53	0.76
4A	2.19	1.68	1.58	1.72	1.66	1.10	1.47	1.08	1.20	1.50
4B	0.49	0.35	0.61	0.47	0.40	0.36	0.49	0.72	0.34	0.56
5A	0.89	0.44	0.34	0.24	0.31	0.41	0.31	0.42	0.57	0.40
5B	0.09	0.00	0.27	0.12	0.31	0.04	0.12	0.33	0.11	0.27
6A	0.70	1.14	0.42	0.36	0.22	0.16	0.19	0.42	0.30	0.37
6B	0.89	0.27	0.34	1.00	0.27	0.36	0.43	0.39	0.45	0.16
7	0.49	0.27	0.34	0.29	0.14	0.12	0.12	0.33	0.34	0.23
8	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	14.03	11.49	11.06	10.92	10.29	9.71	9.31	11.91	10.01	9.90

TABLE 6

Adjusted Mean on Nonstandard Usage by Low Caucasian Group per 1,000 Words of Spoken Volume

Grades Kindergarten through Nine

N = 21

	Grade									
Type of Problem	*Kinder-garten*	*One*	*Two*	*Three*	*Four*	*Five*	*Six*	*Seven*	*Eight*	*Nine*
1A	0.99	0.53	0.81	0.98	0.90	0.25	0.82	0.22	0.76	0.14
1B	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.04
1C	0.87	2.01	2.17	2.32	1.61	1.16	1.80	1.86	1.49	1.60
1D	0.26	0.28	0.36	0.68	0.21	0.05	0.27	0.04	0.14	0.22
1E	1.98	0.66	1.00	1.36	0.77	0.51	0.98	0.18	0.27	0.31
1F	1.60	1.48	1.17	0.98	1.26	1.36	0.98	1.55	1.40	1.42
1G	1.60	3.89	1.45	2.23	3.08	4.23	3.05	4.60	4.24	3.91
2A	1.11	2.14	1.72	1.36	1.12	0.85	1.20	1.23	2.07	1.42
2B	0.00	0.28	0.55	0.20	1.05	0,51	0.82	1.46	1.08	0.67
2C	0.00	0.13	0.09	0.20	0.56	1.00	0.70	4.77	3.88	3.24
3A	0.12	0.66	0.81	0.48	0.77	0.60	1.58	1.90	1.85	2.14
3B	1.74	1.20	1.72	1.25	1.48	0.80	1.25	1.99	1.08	1.60
4A	3.95	4.02	2.08	3.00	2.72	1.41	2.29	2.79	2.57	3.38
4B	0.26	0.53	0.72	0.00	0.62	0.20	0.87	0.62	0.99	0.84
5A	0.61	0.81	0.19	0.98	0.07	0.25	0.87	0.88	1.40	1.11
5B	0.00	0.28	0.09	0.20	0.07	0.15	0.27	0.39	0.95	0.22
6A	0.49	0.66	0.81	0.87	0.84	0.45	0.65	0.31	0.72	0.62
6B	0.75	0.53	0.36	0.68	0.56	0.40	0.55	0.45	0.63	0.62
7	0.99	0.81	1.09	0.87	0.62	0.20	0.98	1.37	1.31	0.84
8	0.26	0.00	0.19	0.20	0.00	0.15	0.22	0.13	0.36	0.35
9	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	17.58	20.90	17.38	18.84	18.31	14.53	20.15	26.78	27.19	24.69

TABLE 7

Adjusted Mean on Nonstandard Usage by Negro Group per 1,000 Words of Spoken Volume

Grades Kindergarten through Nine

N = 21

Type of Problem	*Grade*									
	Kinder-garten	*One*	*Two*	*Three*	*Four*	*Five*	*Six*	*Seven*	*Eight*	*Nine*
1A	12.25	10.02	11.93	8.45	7.66	4.57	3.86	3.97	3.43	2.25
1B	0.43	0.47	0.50	0.45	0.28	0.13	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.00
1C	4.09	3.54	4.28	5.07	3.92	2.65	3.86	4.47	4.13	3.11
1D	2.38	3.25	1.53	1.45	0.94	0.68	0.47	0.70	0.44	0.48
1E	13.38	9.72	6.63	8.56	5.88	3.39	3.16	4.79	2.29	2.54
1F	4.49	4.01	3.25	2.82	2.80	3.27	2.58	3.11	4.73	4.02
1G	6.61	3.08	4.28	4.51	3.35	5.87	6.85	8.01	7.37	5.51
2A	6.34	3.25	3.06	3.15	2.52	2.41	2.40	4.19	3.43	3.40
2B	0.00	0.15	0.21	0.24	0.28	0.19	0.29	0.60	0.35	0.76
2C	0.00	0.15	0.31	0.11	0.09	0.49	0.82	4.03	5.13	3.35
3A	0.86	0.47	0.62	0.56	0.74	1.04	1.58	2.24	2.49	1.63
3B	2.97	1.08	1.12	1.13	1.40	1.61	1.52	1.90	1.49	2.01
4A	9.02	6.94	6.22	5.63	4.00	3.39	4.04	5.56	4.48	3.16
4B	0.13	1.23	0.72	0.56	1.31	0.74	1.29	2.67	1.45	1.15
5A	1.12	0.32	0.62	0.68	0.83	0.38	1.23	0.82	1.84	1.25
5B	0.86	0.00	0.31	0.24	0.00	0.31	0.36	0.38	0.50	0.38
6A	0.13	1.55	0.91	1.45	0.94	1.12	1.58	1.42	1.39	0.62
6B	0.00	0.62	1.63	0.90	0.94	1.36	0.93	1.90	2.09	1.15
7	2.25	3.54	1.94	2.48	2.43	1.91	1.23	2.84	1.79	2.39
8	1.98	1.23	1.72	1.45	1.68	1.91	1.81	0.82	1.84	1.87
9	0.56	0.76	0.21	0.24	0.28	0.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10
TOTAL	69.85	55.38	52.00	50.13	42.27	37.61	39.86	54.59	50.66	41.13

TABLE 8

Adjusted Mean on Nonstandard Usage by Random Group per 1,000 Words of Spoken Volume

Grades Kindergarten through Nine

N = 50

Type of Problem	*Grade*									
	Kinder-garten	*One*	*Two*	*Three*	*Four*	*Five*	*Six*	*Seven*	*Eight*	*Nine*
1A	1.14	0.89	0.57	0.45	0.24	0.10	0.20	0.06	0.07	0.08
1B	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1C	1.29	3.11	1.95	2.79	1.43	0.91	1.06	1.10	1.16	1.00
1D	0.82	0.61	0.41	0.25	0.26	0.00	0.14	0.02	0.06	0.05
1E	1.33	1.12	0.54	0.91	0.39	0.28	0.49	0.20	0.20	0.28
1F	1.29	1.08	0.67	0.66	0.72	0.73	0.57	1.04	0.87	0.85
1G	2.53	2.31	1.45	1.36	2.06	3.36	2.35	3.24	3.11	3.01
2A	2.06	1.23	1.45	0.88	0.82	0.83	1.08	1.59	1.08	1.33
2B	0.09	0.23	0.27	0.59	0.58	0.97	1.08	0.72	1.17	0.93
2C	0.00	0.04	0.17	0.28	0.15	0.64	0.45	2.86	2.31	2.22
3A	0.24	0.51	0.41	0.49	0.63	0.24	1.23	1.47	1.76	1.60
3B	1.33	0.85	0.60	0.80	0.52	0.68	0.60	0.91	0.64	1.10
4A	4.05	2.50	1.71	1.53	1.75	1.33	1.80	2.03	1.69	1.87
4B	0.24	0.19	0.88	0.42	0.63	0.52	0.59	0.70	0.83	0.80
5A	0.71	0.51	0.24	0.45	0.26	0.36	0.68	0.63	0.98	0.91
5B	0.15	0.08	0.14	0.06	0.19	0.06	0.15	0.40	0.42	0.42
6A	0.71	1.23	0.71	0.80	0.52	0.33	0.34	0.50	0.65	0.42
6B	0.90	0.76	0.41	0.83	0.32	0.26	0.45	0.45	0.71	0.48
7	0.66	1.04	0.71	0.52	0.21	0.08	0.42	0.91	0.81	0.68
8	0.28	0.28	0.03	0.06	0.02	0.08	0.11	0.07	0.03	0.03
9	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00
TOTAL	19.86	18.61	13.38	14.13	11.70	11.76	13.79	18.90	18.58	18.06

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

Pupils from homes where standard English prevails do not need drill or help with usage; they need instruction concerned with increasing their coherence and effectiveness.

In ten years of schooling, pupils from homes in which social class dialect is used make almost no improvement in using the verb **to be** appropriately or in standardizing verb forms.

The practice, so common among weaker teachers, of drilling all pupils on the same skill is not supported by this research. Individual pupils, but not whole classes of pupils, will need help if they are to use the standard forms of irregular verbs.

For the pupil to become aware of how the same coherences occur in writing, listening, and reading would reinforce instruction in language. A student's awareness of the pitfalls of communication is necessary for his improvement in coherence.